In the Name of Allah,
the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

قال الله تعالى:

﴿ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيراً ﴾

"Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification"
(*Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* 33:33)

Prophetic traditions mentioned in both in Sunnī and Shī'ah authoritative reference books of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* (exegesis of the Qur'an) have confirmed that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively refer to the People of the Cloak [*ahl al-kisā'*], viz. Muḥammad, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn ('a) as the *Ahl al-Bayt* (People of the Household).

For instance, refer to the following references:

Sunnī

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), *al-Musnad*, 1:231; 4:107; 6:292, 304; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (d. 261 AH), 7:130; Al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH), *Sunan*, 5:361 et al.; Al-Dūlābī (d. 310 AH), *Al-Dhuriyyah al-Ṭāhirah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 108; Al-Nasā'ī (d. 303 AH), *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā'*, 5:108; 113; Al-Ḥakīm al-Nayshābūrī (d. 405 AH), *Al-Mustadrak 'ala' ṣ-Ṣahīḥāyn*, 2:416, 3:133, 146-147; Al-Zarkashī (d. 794 AH), *Al-Burhān*, p. 197; Ibn Hājar al-Asqalānī (d. 852 AH), *Fatḥ al-Barī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 7:104.

Shī'ah

Al-Kulaynī (d. 328 AH), *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, 1:287; Ibn Babawayh (d. 329 AH), *Al-Imāmah wa' t-Tabṣīrah*, p. 47, *ḥadīth* 29; Al-Maghribī (d. 363 AH), *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, pp. 35, 37; Al-Ṣādūq (d. 381 AH), *Al-Khiṣāl*, pp. 403, 550; Al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 AH), *Al-Amalī*, *ḥadīth* 438, 482, 783.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse recorded in the following books of *tafsīr*: Al-Jassās (d. 370 AH), *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; Al-Wāḥidī (d. 468 AH), *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*; Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH), *Zād al-Masīr*; Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 AH), *Al-Jāmi' Li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Tha'labī (d. 825 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Ṭabarī (d. 875 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH), *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*; Al-Shawkānī (d. 1250 AH), *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*; Al-'Ayyāshī (d. 320 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Qummī (d. 329 AH), *Tafsīr*; Furt al-Kūfī (d. 352 AH), *Tafsīr* at the margin of the exegesis of *Sūrat al-Nisā'* verse 59; Al-Ṭabarsī (d. 560 AH), *Majma' al-Bayān*, as well as many other sources.

FRAGRANCES

قال رسول الله ﷺ:

"إني تاركٌ فيكُمُ الثَقلين: كتاب الله، وعترتي أهلَ بيتي، ما إن تمسكتُم بهما لن تضلوا أبداً وأنَّهُما لَن يَفترِقا حتّى يردا عَليَّ الحوضَ"

The Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) said:

"Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things [*thaqalayn*]: The Book of Allah and my progeny [*'itratī*], the members of my Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [*ḥawḍ*] (of *Kawthar*)."

Some references:

- Al-Ḥākim an-Nayshābūrī, *Al-Mustadrak 'alā'ṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut), vol. 3, pp. 109-110, 148, 533
- Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, (English translation), book 31, *ḥadīth*s 5920-3
- At-Tirmidhī, *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 621-2, *ḥadīth*s 3786, 3788; vol. 2, p. 219
- An-Nasā'ī, *Khaṣā'iṣ 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, *ḥadīth* 79
- Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26; vol. 3, pp. 26, 59; vol. 4, p. 371; vol. 5, pp. 181-182, 189-190
- Ibn al-'Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 277
- Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah*, vol. 5, p. 209
- Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 6, p. 199

Naṣīr ad-Dīn al-Albanī, *Silsilāt al-Aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (Kuwait: Ad-Dār aṣ-Ṣalāfiyyah), vol. 4, pp. 355-358

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A Biography of the Imams of the Ahl-al-Bayt (‘a)

By
Bāqir Sharīf al-Qarashī

Translated by
Abdullah Ahmad Zango

Cultural Affairs Department
The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly

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نويسنده: باقر شريف القرشي
مترجم: عبدالله احمد زنگو
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PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

The invaluable legacy of the Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*] of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has provided the Muslim *ummah* with many scholars whom, following in the footsteps of Imāms of the Prophet's Household (*'a*), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well-reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on a defense of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shī'ah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in editing and publishing valuable works by leading Shī'ah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household (*'a*) has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Muḥammad (*Ṣ*).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imām al-Mahdī, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to Shaykh Bāqir Sharīf al-Qarashī the author of the present book, and Abdullahi Ahmad Zango, its translator. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office. ✍

Cultural Affairs Department
Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly

PREFACE

Allah Almighty has indeed chosen the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) as keepers of His secrets, treasurers of His knowledge, interpreters of His revelation, guides towards His straight path; so, He has immunized them from errors, purified them from uncleanliness, and removed from them all kinds of filth just as He has said:

"Surely Allah desires to remove from you all impurities O members of the Household, and purify you a thorough purification."[1]

The glorious Qur'ān has strongly emphasized giving our obedience, oath of allegiance and love to them:

"O Ye who believe, obey Allah and obey his Messenger and those who are in authority among you."[2]

In addition, the saying of Allah the Most Exalted:

"…Say (O' Muhammad unto mankind); I do not ask you of any reward for it (preaching the message) but love for my near relatives, the "Ahlul-Bayt."[3]

The noble Prophet (ṣ) has also emphasised this issue in his popular tradition which is *Mutawatir*, saying: "I am leaving among you the *Thaqalain* (two heavy things), which if you holdfast unto, you will never go astray after my demise. One of them is greater than the other one; i.e., Allah's Book, a rope extending from heaven to earth; the second, my progeny from my household. The two will never separate from one another until they meet at the pool (of *Kauthar* on the Day of Judgment), so be careful of your behaviour towards them after me."

This is because they are Allah's proofs over His servants, successors of the seal of the Prophets (ʿa), bearers of Islamic banners, reserves of

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1- Suratul-*Ahzab*: 33.
2- Suratul-*Nisa*: 59.
3- Suratu-*Shura*: 23.

divine knowledge and light, the best models and pious guides in all forms of worship to Allah the Most High, both in speech and action. Their path is a blessed one surrounded by high values, excellent examples, propagating science and Islamic knowledge, sacrifice, altruism, voluntary renunciation of worldly things, humility, and other noble virtues that will be studied in this book.

In concluding this discussion, I praise the Most Exalted Almighty Allah, who has given me success and made it possible for me to revise the texts and references of this study.

Lastly, I extend many thanks to the "Mua'sasatil-Islamiya i.e. Islamic Research and Information Centre for propagating the Scientific Heritage of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa).

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the universe. Praise and blessings of Allah upon Muhammad and his household, the best of the blessed and righteous.

Mahdi Baqir Qarashi
13 Muharram, 1423 A.H

INTRODUCTION

Man's innate essence and psychology emphatically inform him concerning the creed which he believes and treads on to be secure from the future unknown circumstances, especially those coming after his demise. At the same time, his heart satisfies his (poor) mind which is thirsty for knowledge and is pleased with what it has grasped or discovered in this world of obscurity. We have indeed varying thoughts and differing opinions concerning the great Originator of this universe, (which could not possibly come into existence by chance), that are neither meaningful nor sensible. Some are of the view that the creator is the leading Star (the Sun) because it gives us heat; while others are of the view that the creator is the Moon because of its benefits and wonders in terms of its appearance, its gradual growth to its fullness, and its disappearance.[1] Still some (people) out of ignorance adhere to the worshipping of idols and carved statues and images which they have made with their own hands, thus taking them as gods and worshiping them in place of Almighty God.

There were about 360 idols installed on the walls of the Holy Ka'aba (the house of God in Mecca). The idol named *Hubal*, belonged to Abu Sufiyan, the father of Mu'awiya and the grandfather of Yazid, while the remaining idols belonged to the families of the Quraish residing within the vicinity of Mecca and outside it.

Allah (swt) sent His great Prophets and Messengers to His servants to develop human thinking, liberate it from ignorance and corrupt customs. Similarly, they called for total liberation of mankind, i.e., freedom of choice, freedom of action and freedom of worship.

Amongst the greatest tasks delegated to the Prophets was to invite people to Allah's worship and His *Tawhid* (His Oneness), for He is the Creator of the universe and the Giver of life. Furthermore, the most important aspect of their calls is the establishment of a society

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1- A grave was discovered close to Ayni Tamri in Iraq with pictures of the sun the moon and some stars drawn on its wall which shows their worship by men.

free from superstitious beliefs that throw man into an unstable state far below human standards.

The foremost reformer in this western part of the Arabian peninsular was Prophet Ibrahim (Peace be upon him). He strived hard to institute Allah's words on earth and rebelled against the advocates of polytheism and disbelief. He played a very important role in demolishing and destroying the (disbelievers') idols.[1] His people felt extremely uneasy about his calls. When they could no more bear them, they decided to punish him. Namrud, the dictator of his time, sentenced him to the worst type of torture and punishment. Therefore, they prepared a huge fire. They threw him into the fire by means of a *Manjalikh* (catapult), but Allah Almighty made the fire cold and peaceful for him.[2] This was the kind of confrontation and struggle Allah's Prophets put up in order to establish the words of Allah on earth and free man mentally and morally from the worship of anything except God the Most High.

The great caller and reformer, Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) appeared on the arena of *Tawhid* (Oneness of God) and Freedom carrying a (divine) light with him. He caused a (spiritual) earthquake by destroying the creeds of the age of *Jahiliyya* (era of Ignorance), that were at their peak and drowned in sins and superstitious. Rays of the (divine) light fell on Mecca, the centre of idols and carved statues. At that time no tribe or house was without an idol worshipped in place of Allah. The Prophet (ṣ) firmly stood against all these, and after strenuous efforts he established *Tawhid* and cleansed the *Ka'aba* for the worship of God the Most High. With this, he indeed changed the course of history and saved man from that lowly state.

It is pertinent to mention here that the majority of the Qur'ānic verses and chapters that were revealed from the Lord of the Universe to His Messenger Muhammad (ṣ), while in Mecca, contain reliable evidence

1- Refer to Suratun *Nisa'i* verses 51-67 of the Holy Qur'an that clearly depict the struggle and the confrontation of our leader Prophet Ibrahim (as) against idols.
2- Allah changed the natural quality of fire from burning heat to its exact opposite, which is pleasant coolness, and this is the most familiar definition of miracle with which Allah the Most Powerful supports His Prophets.

and decisive proof on the existence of God the Almighty, Creator (of this universe) which no human being can contend, no matter how mentally ill he might be.

After the Prophet (ṣ) was forced to migrate from Mecca to *Yathrib* (Medina), Allah the Most High, gave him a clear victory over Mecca. His opponents and foes among the Quraish dictators and the Arab "wolves" were overpowered and debased. The Prophet (ṣ) established a great state with an enlightened and advanced legal system which gave birth to the greatest human civilization of that time. Every problem of life was dealt with. It did not leave out any aspect of human life without clear laws guiding it, be it as slight as *Arsh Kadash* (compensation money paid for a scratch caused to somebody). The Islamic laws were a blessing for the purpose for which they were established. The practical laws were simple and suitable for (man's) innate nature and conformed to any system of (human) life. He gave the people his trustees and successors, the rightly guided Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa).

One of the issues that was of great concern to the Prophet (ṣ) in his life-time was that of the leadership of his community after his demise, therefore, he appointed the person who would succeed him as the custodian of the values and principles which he had brought to the people as guidance. He was so concerned about this issue that right from the beginning of his call he made a combined call for faith in his message and as successor after his demise. Narrators of *Ahadith* (of all sects) unanimously agree that the only person who answered to that call was Amirul Mu'minin (the leader of the faithful) ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa), at that time, a mere boy. The Prophet (ṣ) declared him as his Trustee and Successor.

Indeed, the Prophet (ṣ) had searched from among his household and his companions but did not find one who could equal Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa). This was because of his unadulterated faith in God the Most High, and his devotion to the religion, and his intellectual power. The Prophet (ṣ) trained him until he became his true picture. Thus, he made him the flag bearer for his nation after him in order to straighten its crookedness, rectify its problems, and guide it to that which was upright.

The Prophet (ṣ) appointed and made clear the Imamate (leadership) of Imam Amirul Mu'minin after him on several occasions. The prophetic traditions are full of the fact that the Prophet (ṣ) always put him in the same position as himself; he (ʻAli (ʻa)) was to him just like Hārūn was to Musa (ʻa); he was with the truth and the truth was with him; he was the gate to the city of his knowledge. **He *(ṣ)* strengthened that by making people pay an oath of allegiance to him *(ʻa)* at Ghadir Khum. He appointed a leader for the Muslim Ummah and made loyalty to his leadership obligatory upon every Muslim man and woman.** They pledged to be loyal to him and took the oath of allegiance in recognition of his leadership and successor ship. All the pilgrims who were with him and those who were heading towards their countries participated in this great occasion of Ghadir Khum! He also commanded his wives to pay allegiance to him. Therefore, that day became a memorial day in the history of Islam and was named *Day of Faith*, and *Day of great Bounty* or *Favour*.

If we review the lives of the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʻa), we will find them full of high principles and values.

Thanks to Allah, I have been with them for more than forty-years, busy recording their sayings, and then distributing their biographies and sayings among people. Allah bear witness that I have never opened any file of any Imam to write about him without finding a (new) light, guidance, honour and respect present in all aspects of his life.

The life-history of the pure Imams (ʻa) is characterized by complete abstinence from the luxuries of this life while they were renowned for turning towards the Most High, reciting His Book unconditionally and worshipping Him exclusively. They used to spend their nights in worshipping God, making themselves lowly before Him and reciting His Book, while their opponents spent their red nights in complete immorality. May Allah bless Aba Firash who made a comparison between the household of the Prophet (ṣ) and the children of Abbas, saying:

From their houses, the sound of recitation (of the Holy Qur'ān) is ever heard

While from your houses, string music sound is ever heard.

In this way, the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt represent the pillars of piety, righteousness, and (true) faith, while their opponents are a good example of corruption, totally devoid of all moral ethics and human values.

Since the dawn of Islam up till now, the Shi'as believe that the Holy Imams (ʿa) had been guides to others, protectors and guardians of Islam, inheritors of the Messenger of God (ṣ) and guides of the Book of God. This belief of theirs was not accidental, or biased or blind imitation, but based on the Book of Allah, the Great Qur'an, and the sanctified prophetic traditions which a Muslim cannot overlook or disregard. There is manifest proof that has made the love of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) incumbent upon the Muslims. Among them is the saying of Allah the Most High: **"Say I do not ask thee of any reward for it (the toil of my messenger ship) except that you should love my kith and kin."** The holy verse has enjoined the Muslims to give their loyalty and love to the pure household of the Prophet (ṣ). One notable kind of love is to obey whatever Islamic legislation or *Sharia* they practice and teach.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) do not have any separate or independent system of Islamic Legislation apart from that of the Prophet (ṣ), but are all derived and taken from him. Thus, acts of rituals (*Ibadat*), two-sided and one-sided contracts and transactions, all are from one source: the Prophet (ṣ). The Islamic supreme authority in jurisprudence Imam Sadiq (ʿa) has openly declared that whatever he narrates of the Islamic laws and excellent ethics and good morals, etc., are all from his great noble fathers who in turn received them from the Prophet (ṣ). Therefore, their narratives present the fundamental nature of Islam and the true picture of what was revealed by the Lord of the universe. There is no refutation at all in this regard from other Islamic schools of thought that have their own respective scientific method of deriving or receiving them (i.e. the Prophetic traditions).

All legislation received from the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) are based on pure truth and clear justice. Therefore, there is nothing crooked, difficult, and ambiguous in them. They are the most important proofs upon which the Shi'a scholars rely. For example, the law of prohibiting anything capable of causing unease and discomfort in the *Din* (religion)

is given priority over the primary law of causing discomfort or inconvenience to a grown-up Muslim upon whom Islamic laws are binding. In this way, the secondary law of removing harm from others is given priority over the primary law if it causes harm to others.

In any case, the school of thought of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) in all aspects of *Sharia* and Islamic legislation is evolving equally with the times, and meets the high demands of man in the highly developed scientific world of today.

Among the prominent companions of the Prophet (ṣ) who took to the school of thought of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) were people like Ammar Ibn Yasir, Salman Faris, Abi Zarr Al-Ghaffari and the great ones among the children of the Aws and Khazraj: those upon whose efforts and struggles Islam was established and strengthened. This was because they knew what the Prophet (ṣ) had said concerning his household as being the Ship of salvation, guides of the *Wise Reminder* (Qur'ān), the gates of forgiveness; and that their leader Imam Amirul Mu'minin ʻAli (ʿa) was with the truth and the truth was with him, and he was to the Prophet (ṣ) what Hārūn was to Musa; their "Mazhab" symbolized the Mazhab of the truth.

On this Al-Kamiat, a Muslim poet said,

I have nothing save the Shi'a of the household of Ahmad; And I have nothing save the "Mazhab" of the truth.

The school of thought of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) would have been the only prominent and popular one in Islamic society if the Umayyad and Abbasids had not politically monopolized their rule, because this school was directly connected to the Prophet (ṣ) and was taken from him. However, the Umayyads and the Abbasids intentionally fought against the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) because the (Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa)) were an obstacle to their rule which was purely based on oppression and force. In fact, they directed all their political and economic power to confront the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) and their followers. This situation forced the Holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) to order their Shi'as (followers) to apply *Taqiyya* (an apparent action adopted under difficult situation in order to save one from danger or harm). Therefore, they concealed their doctrine for fear of merciless and open persecution and protected themselves from brutal punishments like removing (people's) eyes.

They were deprived of their natural rights, while their testimony in the *Sharia* court of law was neither recognized nor accepted.

The Shi'as suffered the worst types of torture and faced difficult trials during the days of Umayyad and Abbasid rule. They subjected them to different types of tortures, for e.g., hands were cut, eyes removed, and death on mere suspicion and baseless allegations.

Concerning this, Sheikh Tusi has said, "No sect among the Islamic sects suffered like the Shi'as of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) in terms of persecution and brutality. He traced the reason for that back to their doctrine or belief in the Imamate (Leadership) of the Holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa). What could they do when they found all good and high attributes present in the Imams, and sadly missing in the leaders ruling the Muslims with the force of the sword and not with the power of justice? They also found that they (those kings) had usurped the position from the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa). Thus, they carried out revolutions to topple their governments.

The Shiites had indeed established political and social justice with dignity and pride, therefore, they demanded that the state wealth and income be distributed among the Muslims equally and not according to the wishes of the rulers. The Umayyads and Abbasids consequently made use of all possible means to confront them and applied different methods of brutality, torture and high handedness against them.

They raised baseless allegations against the Shi'as. Among these allegations was that the Shi'as perform prostration for idols i.e. that they prostrate on the *Turbatu Imam Husain (ʿa)* (i.e. molded clay taken from Imam Husain's (ʿa) grave or its vicinity. We have explained this in detail in our book called *"As-Sujud ala Turbatu Husainiyya inda Shi'a"* (Reasons behind the prostration on Turbatu Husainiyya). This has been published several times and translated into English and other languages. We have clearly explained that the Shi'as only prostrate on this clay (during their payers to God) because the reformer and great saviour of Islam, Imam Husain (ʿa), the grandson of the Prophet (ṣ), was martyred on this piece of land (called Karbala).

There are some unanimous prophetic traditions that say that Jibrail (Angel Gabriel) gave the Prophet (ṣ) a handful of the sand taken from the pure land (of Karbala) and thereby, informed him (ṣ) that his

grandson Imam Husain (ʿa) would be martyred on it. Since then, the Prophet (ṣ) started to smell and kiss this piece of land. Therefore, the Shiites prostrate to Allah the Most High, the Most Solitary and Supreme, on the clay which the Prophet (ṣ) used to smell and kiss. Of course, there were many baseless accusations upon which they used to judge the Shi'as and punish them for. Some would even pass judgements that they had left Islam.

This brief account of the lives of the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) is nothing but a call to the truth and means of bringing people together. The Holy Qur'ān is the original foundation upon which the accounts of this study are based. It is also based on the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ). In it there is call for truth and sincerity (of purpose) for (the sake of) reality, and a call for the Islamic Ummah to unite on the basis of love and harmony.

Indeed, what humanity has experienced concerning its outstanding achievement in the different fields of law has not equalled the unique achievements and the developments the Shi'a school of thought has had in the field of law and politics. This is because the conditions laid down for the Imam (leader) of a nation are extremely tough. Moral perfection, high personality, total knowledge concerning laws and administration of humanity, continuous struggle to ensure the welfare and development of the nation in all its aspects, economical, educational, social and political, and provide security, stability, peace and all other essentials needed for countries to develop.

Certainly, all these qualities had never manifested themselves in any person except in the rightly guided Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa); those who had completely liberated themselves from all kinds of materialistic tendencies and purified themselves for the truth with the highest possible sincerity. This actually materialized in the Islamic world when Imam ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa) took the reigns of leadership of the *Ummah*. He declared equal treatment of all citizens, Muslims or non Muslims; he observed equality in distributing national wealth and was never influenced by ties of kinship (or blood relation). The story of how he dealt with his brother Aqil and his nephew Abdullah Ibn Ja'far, the husband of his daughter, is well-known; the two were among the closest people to him, but never made him give them any preferential treatment with regard to public funds and property.

He was very cautious with himself to the highest possible degree. Imam ʻAli (ʿa) has actually recorded down (for us) the most excellent forms of Islamic teachings in the fields of Government and Leadership. These are manifested in his treatises and letters to his governors and ministers. All that a nation needs for its progress and development in all areas of its life is present in these letters. It is necessary that these documents, letters and treatises be studied analytically and included in the clause of laws of the Imamiyya sect, for they are part of the responsibilities of the leader of the Ummah according to the Shi'a school of thought.

I have prepared this introduction as a foundation for the study of the school of thought of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa), and I have recorded their principles of education, training and ethics and what is derived from their noble characters and high values. Ibn Khaldun[1] and Ahmad Amin Al-Misri and others have written about the holy Imams and their Shi'a followers without studying or researching from the original sources, and out of fanaticism and blind following laid baseless accusations against them, accusations that do not exist in the realm of logical evaluation. I have compiled the biographies of the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) and their influence and practice which formed a special chapter. I saw that it was wiser to make it a separate and independent book which I named "Fragrances from the Lives of the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa)."

I extend many thanks to his Honourable Sayyid Abdullah Sayyid Hashim Al-Musawi for he granted me an opportunity to publish some other books of mine concerning the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa).

We invoke Allah the Almighty to compensate him abundantly and give him a great reward for this work. Indeed Allah the Most High is powerful over it.

Holy city of Najaf
Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi
25 Rabi' al-Thani, 1421 A.H.

1- Muqadimatu Ibn Khaldun P.196-202.

THE IMAMS OF THE AHLUL-BAYT *(ʿA)*

The Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa), are callers for social reform, lamps of awareness and intellect in the Islamic world, who established perfect freedom in man's thought, will and action, and saved him from the worship of anything other than Allah (swt), the Creator of the universe and the Giver of life.

Verily the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) belong to the seed of Prophethood and are rays of its light. They are indeed from the blessed tree that is firmly rooted, whose branches extend into the heavens, giving out its fruits with the permission of its Lord.

They are essential parts that cannot be separated from the life of the noble Prophet (ṣ) who upgraded the standard of human life from an unbecoming and lowly state to a life which is radiant and flourishes with awareness and (divine) light.

We hereby start with a brief discussion on their leader i.e. Imam ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa).

Imam ʿAlibin abi Talib *(ʿa)*

He is the father of this nation after the holy Prophet (ṣ) because of his God-given talents, his uniqueness, his justice, his abstinence, his *Jihad* i.e., fighting in the cause of Allah. There was nobody in the Islamic world amongst the companions of the Prophet (ṣ) who shared most of his grand attributes with him, like ʿAli ibn Abi Talib. We can say with great pride and honour that his grand attributes have been accepted by all tribes and communities over the surface of the earth, Muslims and non-Muslims. They have all agreed unanimously that indeed he has no equal. The history of Eastern Arabia had never produced his kind except his brother, the son of his uncle i.e. the Messenger of God (ṣ). We will now dwell briefly on some of his characteristics.

He is *Walid e Ka'aba* (one born in Kaa'ba)

Prophetic traditions and historians have agreed upon the fact that without doubt Amirul Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) was born in the Holy Kaa'ba[1] and that no one apart from him had ever been born there; indeed a great sign which portrays his grand position with Allah the Most High. Abdul-Baqi Al-Amiri has mentioned this in his poem:

You are 'Ali who was raised to the highest peak

Inside Ka'aba, the house of God, you were delivered

The Prophet's brother, the gate of his knowledge, was born in the holiest house of God the Most High, in order to give light to its vicinity and raise the banner of Tawhid in it, and purify it from the filth of idols. Indeed the father of the poor, joy of the miserable and deprived, was delivered in this great house in order to induce in the lives of these people the spirit of security, comfort, peace and stability, and to remove from their lives the shadows of destitution and hardship. His father, the leader of those who prostrate and the believers of the Quraish, named him 'Ali (One who is high) which is one of the most excellent and beautiful names. He was high in those qualities that Allah bestowed on him, like physical strength, intellectual ability, *Bayan* (eloquence in elucidation), high morals and virtues. **He was born on Friday, 13th of the month of Rajab,** thirty years after the year of "Fil" (elephant), also twelve years before the Prophethood of Muhammad (ṣ).[2]

1- Muruj al-Thahab 2:3, Al-Fusul-Muhimma (Ibn Sibag) P.24, Maṭallib-Su'ul: 22, Tazkirat Khawas:7, Kifayatu Ṭālib: 37 Nuru Absar: 76, Nuzhatul-Majalis 2: 204, Sharh-Shifa 2: 15, Gayafil-Ikhtisar: 97, Abqaritil-Imam (Uniqueness of Imam): 38, Mustadrakil-Hakim: Vol.3 P.483, and in it there is a statement: "There are numerous narrations that Fatima bint Asad delivered Amirul Mu'minin 'Ali bin Abi Ṭālib inside the Kaa'ba."

2- Hayatu-Imam Amirul Mu'uminin (as) Vol.1 P.32, quoted from Manaqib 'Ali Abi Ṭālib Vol.3 P.9.

His titles

The Leader of the Faithful, ‘Ali (ʿa), was given many titles which reflect his excellent attributes, some of which are:

1. *As-Siddiq*[1] (the Trustworthy one)

This title was given to him because he was the first person to testify to the truth of the Messengership of the Prophet (ṣ). He believed in all that he had brought from Almighty Allah. He himself said; “I am the foremost of the truthful ones, I believed in Islam before Abubakr, and I professed Islam before him.”[2]

2. *Al-Wasi* (The Trustee)

This title was given to him because he was the inheritor of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) who awarded this title to him when he said, “Surely the best of those I leave behind is the one who will fulfill my promises and pay my debts, and he is ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib.”[3]

3. *Al-Faruq* (The Distinguisher i.e. between truth and falsehood)

This title was given to him because he could distinguish the truth from falsehood. This title was taken from the prophetic traditions (*Ahadith)* that granted this to him. Abu Zarr and Salman narrated that the Prophet (ṣ) took hold of ‘Ali’s hand (one day) and said; “This is the first man who believed in me and he will be the first person to shake hands with me on the Day of Judgment; and he is the most perfect of the truthful ones. He is the Faruq of this *Ummah* (nation) because he can distinguish between the truth and falsehood.”[4]

4. *Ya’asubu-Din* (Religious guide or Leader)

Al-Ya’asub linguistically means the male bee, but it is borrowed and used to mean a respected leader of the people. It is one of the titles of Amirul Mu’minin (ʿa). While awarding this title the Prophet (ṣ)

1 - Tarikhul-Khamis, Vol. 2, P. 275.
2- Al- Ma’arif P. 58, Ar-Riyad –Nadira Vol. 2, P. 257.
3- Kanzul Ummal Vol.6 P.154.
4- Majma’ul-Zara’id Vol.9 P.102, Faidul-Al-Qadir, Vol.4, P.358, Kanzul Ummal Vol.6, P.156, Fada’ilul-Sahaba (the virtues of the companions of the Prophet (saw)) Vol.1, P.297.

pointed towards Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) and said, “This is the leader of the believers while wealth is the leader of the wrong-doers.”[1]

5. *Amirul Mu’minin* (The Commander of the Believers)

This is the most famous title of Imam ‘Ali (ʿa). This title was given to him by the Prophet (ṣ). Abu Naim narrated through his Sanad (chain) from Anas, who said; “The Prophet (ṣ) said: “O Anas, pour the water for me (to perform ablution). Then he stood up and prayed two *rakaats* (units of prayer). Then he said, “O Anas, the first person who will come in to meet me in this house (today) is the Commander of the believers, the Leader of the Muslims and the Guide of *Gharrul Muhajjalin* (Unique ones) and *Khatim ul Wasiyyin* (the Seal of the Trustees) i.e. of the Prophets.” Anas said: “O Allah, may he be a man from the *Ansar* (supporter of Prophet (ṣ) when they migrated to Medina). Then suddenly ‘Ali (ʿa) came in. The Prophet (ṣ) asked, “O Anas, who is that? I said, ‘Ali. Then he (ṣ) stood up and moved towards him smiling, and embraced him and started rubbing the sweat from his face on ‘Ali’s face and rubbing ‘Ali’s on his face (ṣ). Then ‘Ali (ʿa) declared, “O Messenger of God, I see you doing something to me which you have never done to me before.” The Prophet (ṣ) said “What can stop me from doing this when you are the one who will fulfill my promises, pay my debts and (return what people have entrusted to me to their respective owners), convey to them (the people) my voice (speeches), and explain to them, concerning what they differ upon, after me.””[2]

6. *Hujjatullah* (God’s Proof)

This is one of his greatest titles. He was indeed a proof from God over His servants, guiding to that which is upright. The Prophet (ṣ) gave this title to him when he said, “‘Ali and I are Allah’s proofs over His servants.”[3]

These are only some of his noble titles. We have mentioned six of his titles in volume one of the book called “*Musuatil-Imam Amirul*

1- Majma’aul-Zawa’id Vol.9, P.102.
2- Hiliyatu Awliya’u Vol.1 P.63.
3- Kanzul Haqa’iq (Al-Ma’anawi), P. 43.

Mu'minin ('a). In a similar way we have also mentioned his nicknames and qualities in detail.

His upbringing

Amirul Mu'minin ('a) spent his early childhood under the care and protection of his father Abi Talib, the eldest Mu'min (believer) of the Quraish, a model of virtues, an honoured and respected person. His (early) training was under the care of his mother, Sayyidatu Fatimah bint Asad, who was the leader of the women of her time because of her decency, her purity and her dignified excellent personal qualities. She fed him with virtuous ethics, decent customs and noble manners.

His childhood under the care of the Prophet *(ṣ)*

The Prophet (ṣ) took care of the Imam while he was in his early childhood. His uncle Abu Talib was visited by serious economic constraints, so the Prophet (ṣ) hastened towards his uncles Hamza and Abbas and informed them of his uncle's condition and demanded that they should do something to ease his crisis.

So Abbas took Talib (from him), while Hamza took Ja'far from him, and the Prophet (ṣ) took 'Ali from him. He (ṣ) had indeed sowed into the soul of Imam 'Ali the essence of his struggle and principles, making him firmly believe in him (ṣ). He was the closest person to him, and the best of those who followed his ethical teachings, and morals; he understood his message better than others did.

Imam 'Ali ('a) himself spoke about the Prophet's special care for him and his closeness and dealing with him. He ('a) said, "You are already aware of my position with the Prophet (ṣ) in terms of my next of kin and my special position with him. He used to carry me when I was a child and would hug me and cover me up in his mat and make me smell the scent of his body and sweat. He (ṣ) used to feed me by chewing something and then putting it into my mouth. He never found me lying in any of my utterances or doing wrong in any of my deeds. I used to follow him like the young calf follows the footsteps of its mother. He used to train me concerning moral ethics upto a certain level everyday and command me to follow it."

Don't you see this strong kinship between the Prophet (ṣ) and Imam ʻAli (ʻa), especially how the Prophet (ṣ) used to show great sympathy, affection, and tenderness for him and attend to his training?

His protection for the Prophet *(ṣ)*

When the great revolution of the Prophet (ṣ) destroyed the concepts, traditions and customs of the days of ignorance, the Quraish provided children with stones to stone him (ṣ), while Imam ʻAli, (ʻa) barely a boy, remained by his side defending him. He (ʻa) used to beat and scare those children so that whenever any of those children saw him by the side of the Prophet (ṣ), they would run away to their fathers, scared and defeated.

The first man to accept Islam

One of the issues which the historians and narrators of prophetic traditions have unanimously agreed upon was the fact that Imam ʻAli (ʻa) was the first man who believed in the Prophethood of the Prophet (ṣ) and responded to his call. He had declared that he was the first man of this nation to worship Allah (swt): "Surely I had worshipped Allah the Most Exalted before any person of this community could worship Him."[1]

According to what the narrators of the prophetic traditions have agreed upon is that Amirul Mu'minin ʻAli ibn Abi Talib (ʻa) had never been contaminated by the worship of idols of the days of ignorance, and had never worn its dress of indecency, and had never (even once) prostrated before the idols, contrary to other companions of the Prophet (ṣ). Maqrizi says: "But as for ʻAli ibn Abi Talib Al-Hashimi, he never associated partners with Allah at all and this is because of what Allah (swt) had intended for him in terms of goodness, so He put him under the care of his cousin, the leader of the Messengers."[2]

It is pertinent to mention here that her majesty, the mother of the believers, Khadijah, the wife of the Prophet (ṣ) embraced Islam

1- Saftul Safwa Vol.1, P.162.
2- Imta'il Asma'i Vol.1, P.16.

together with Imam ʻAli (ʻa). Imam ʻAli spoke about his (early) belief and the belief of Khadijah (ʻa) in Islam, when he said: "In those days no house contained even one Muslim except that of the Prophet (ṣ). It contained the Prophet (ṣ) himself, Khadijah (ʻa), and I was the third of them."[1]

Ibn Ishaq said, "'Ali (ʻa) was the first person to believe in the oneness of God and in Muhammad (ṣ) as the Messenger of Allah.[2] He was only 7 years or 9 years old at the time he accepted Islam."[3] Surely ʻAli's precedence is a matter which all the Muslims unanimously agree upon.

His affection for the Prophet *(ṣ)*

Imam ʻAli (ʻa) was sincere to the highest degree in his love for the Prophet (ṣ). Somebody once asked him about his love for the Prophet (ṣ), and he declared: "By God he was more beloved to us than our wealth, our children, our mothers and more than what cold water is to the thirsty."[4]

An example of his affection for the Prophet (ṣ), was that once he came to a fenced garden and the owner of the garden offered to give him a date for every bucket of water with which he watered the garden. He accepted and hurried to water the garden until he was able to get a handful of dates from the owner; then, he immediately hastened to the Prophet (ṣ) and fed him with them.[5]

Also among his overwhelming love for the Prophet (ṣ) was that he volunteered to take charge of serving him and fulfilling his needs. We have given examples of such instances in our book *Mausu'ati-al-Imam Amirul Mu'minin (ʻa)* (Encyclopedia of the leader of the faithful and his life).

1- Hayatu Imam Amirul Mu'minin (as) Vol.1, P.54.
2- Sharh Nahjul Balagha (Ibn Abi Hadid): Vol.4, P.116.
3- Sahihu Tirmizi Vol.2, P.301, Tabqati Ibn Sa'ad Vol.3, P.21, Kanzul Ummal Vol. 6, P. 400, Tarikhu Tabari Vol.2, P.55.
4- Khazanatu Adab Vol.3, P.213.
5- Tarikhu Tabari Vol.2, P.63, Tarikh Ibn Athir Vol.2, P.24, Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal P.263. In addition, the hadith agrees with his narration.

Yaum Dar (the day the Prophet *(ṣ)* invited his close relatives)

Imam ʻAli (ʻa) in the prime of youth accompanied the Prophet (ṣ) when he proclaimed his Prophethood and mission. He was commanded to convey his Message to his near relatives. The Prophet (ṣ) called ʻAli (ʻa) and instructed him to invite them. Among them were his uncles, Abu Talib, Hamza, Abbas and Abu Lahab. Imam ʻAli (ʻa) served them with food and drink. They all ate (to their satisfaction), while the food remained as it was and did not decrease at all.

When they had finished taking their food, the Prophet (ṣ) invited them to accept Islam and give up idol worship. Suddenly Abu Lahab interrupted his speech (ṣ) and said to his kinsfolk, "He has indeed bewitched you people (with this)". The meeting ended without any (positive) outcome whatsoever. On the following day, the Prophet (ṣ) decided to call another meeting. When all those invited had taken their meals, he addressed them saying, "O children of Abdul Muṭalib, by Allah, I do not know of any young man among the tribes of Arabs who has ever brought something to his tribe better than what I have brought for you. Indeed, I have brought for you the goodness of this World and the Hereafter. Allah the Almighty has commanded me to invite you to it., Who amongst you would be my helper in this matter, so that he will be my brother, my Wasi (vicegerent) and successor?" All those present abstained from answering as if there were birds on their heads. Then ʻAli ibn Abi Talib (ʻa) who was in the prime of youth and the youngest of them, moved forward and said to him with enthusiasm: "I, O Prophet of God, I will be your helper in it". Then the Prophet (ṣ) placed his hand on his shoulder and addressed the people saying, "This is my brother, my trustee (Wasi), my successor among you, so listen to him and obey him." Then there came a loud voice from the people making a mockery of what he had said. They addressed Abi Talib saying, "You have been commanded to listen to your (own) son and obey him."[1]

This hadith concerning which there is unanimous agreement upon its narration has a clear meaning as regards the leadership of Amirul Mu'minin ʻAli ibn Abi Talib (ʻa). We have dealt with the content of

1- Tarikh Tabari Vol.2 P.3, Tarikh Ibn-al-Athir Vol.2 P.24, Musnad Ahmad P. 263.

this in more detail in volume one of our book named *Mau'suat-al-Imam Amirul Mu'minin ('a)*.

"In the valley of Abi Talib"

The Quraish agreed on a social boycott of the Prophet (ṣ) and forced him and his followers into the valley of Abi Talib. They imposed upon them a kind of forceful detention so that people could not interact with them, because that made people change their creed and washed their brain from the filth of the Jahiliya (day of ignorance).

The agreement they reached upon was to take the following measures against the Hashimites:

They would not marry (their sons and daughters) to the Hashimites.

They would not sell or buy anything from them.

They wrote a communiqué to that effect and pasted it on the wall of the Kaa'ba (for every one to see).

Thus, the Prophet (ṣ) and those who believed in him from among his family-members among the Hashimites, notably Amirul Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a), were all kept under detention in that valley and they never separated from him.

They suffered different kinds of tortures and miseries. Ummul Mu'minin Khadijah (may Allah have mercy on her) supported them with all they needed until she had expended all that she possessed.

The Prophet (ṣ) and the members of his household remained as detainees in this prison for two years or more until Allah send termites to destroy the communiqué pasted on the wall of the Kaa'ba. The Prophet (ṣ) informed his uncle Abi Talib of this matter. He hastened to them and informed them about it. They were afraid and hurried to the scene of their *Sahifa*, and found it as the Prophet (ṣ) had informed, which astonished and frightened them. Then a group amongst the Quraish stood up and demanded the release of the Prophet (ṣ). They responded to this call and ended the boycott. The Prophet and members of his household came back to their homes in Mecca, physically worn out. The Prophet (ṣ) resumed calling people to Tawhid (oneness of God) and renouncing the Jahiliyya creed without caring for the Quraish and their threats or for their unanimous

stand to punish him. He was in the protection of his uncle, Abu Talib. In addition, Abu Talib used to encourage him to convey his message and spread his mission as he wished, thus, saying to him:

Go my son, go without blame, and cool their eyes with that which is with you.

By God, they cannot harm you in the least with all their troops, until I die defending you

You have always spoken the truth and were always trustworthy,

Indeed, I know that the religion of Muhammad is the best of all,

So declare your message without fear, and with it give glad tidings and cool the eyes.[1]

This poem declares and shows the extent of Abu Talib's faith. He was a great defender of Islam and the foremost 'Mujahid' (fighter or struggler) among the early Muslim heroes. Perished be he who believes that he was not a Muslim and will be in the lowest hell-fire.

Surely, Abu Talib was a pillar among the pillars of Islamic principles. Had it not been for his noble stance, there would have remained no name or trace of Islam, and the Quriash would have nipped it in the bud.

Imam 'Ali *('a)* passing the night on the Prophet's bed *(ṣ)*

Imam 'Ali's ('a) foremost merit was physically protecting the Prophet (ṣ) and being ready to die for his sake. Thus, he was the first person in the Islamic world who sacrificed his life for the sake of Islam.

The Quraish planned and unanimously agreed to murder the holy Prophet (ṣ) so as to put an end to him and his call, once and for all. They surrounded his house from all directions with their swords unsheathed. The Prophet (ṣ) called his cousin Imam 'Ali ('a) and informed him of what the people had planned to do to him. Then he ordered him to pass the night on his bed and put on his green garment so that those accursed people would think it was the Prophet (ṣ).

1- The life of Imam Amirul Mu'minin (as) Vol.1 P.137.

Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) received this order of the Prophet (ṣ) with joy. He longed to sacrifice his life for the Prophet (ṣ). Then the Prophet (ṣ) went out passing through them while they did not notice him. He sprayed dust over their filthy faces, saying, “Take this, O ye faces, overwhelmed by humiliation,” He recited the holy verse:

“And we have set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them; and have covered them over, so that they cannot see.”[1]

The passing of the night of Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) on the Prophet’s bed was a shining example of the jihad (struggle) of Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) for Islam, and awards him an incomparable status. Allah Almighty has revealed a verse concerning this event saying:

“And of men there is he who would sell himself to achieve the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is compassionate to His servants.”[2]

Undoubtedly, this noble trait played a very important role in the propagation of Islam, (an achievement) which no one else among the Muslims had earned. The great poet Al-Mulhim Sheikh Hashim Al-Ka’abi while addressing and praising Imam (ʿa) has said:

You possess a status which no one surpasses except Ahmad (ṣ),

With your grand position (Islam) is known and identified,

Upon the bed you passed the night, sleeping peacefully,

While the enemy sent murderous looks from without,

You slept as if they were singing beautiful songs of birds,

And you woke up opposing them like a huge mountain or brave horse

Sufficient were you that night for him

They kept watch till dawn, then darted to quell the great treasure of guidance,

(Unaware that God) had safeguarded the great treasure of guidance

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1- Suratu *Yasin*: 9.
2- Suratu *Baqarah*: 207.

Imam ʻAli (ʻa) prayed to Allah to save His Messenger (ṣ) from the evil intentions of the enemy, and slept. When the light of dawn appeared, the transgressors with their swords unshielded attacked the sleeping place of the Prophet (ṣ) (thinking that he was the one lying down) but (surprisingly) Imam ʻAli (ʻa) rose up from it with his unsheathed sword. When they saw him, they were surprised, unnerved, and shouted at him: "Where is Muhammad? He replied sharply, "Did you people make me watch over him?" They turned back on their heels, pulling their garments in frustration over this disappointment and loss.

In this way the Prophet (ṣ), who had come to give them liberty, escaped their arrest (and assassination). They were dismayed to see Imam ʻAli (ʻa) and frowned at him, but he ignored them with disdain and walked bravely to and fro in front of them sending them the message that all their plans had turned into jest and mockery.

Imam's Migration to Yathrib (Medina)

After the successful migration of the Prophet (ṣ) from Mecca to Medina, Imam ʻAli (ʻa) began to discharge the duties that the Prophet (ṣ) had placed upon him. He returned all the trusts that were in the custody of the Prophet (ṣ) to their respective owners and paid all the Prophet's (ṣ) debts. Thereafter, he migrated to Medina himself in order to meet his brother and cousin. Among those who traveled with him on this journey were the pious Fatimahs. On the way, seven Quraish transgressors stopped him and wanted to prevent him and the women from migrating, but the Imam (ʻa) confronted them bravely, killed one of them, while the rest ran away.

The Imam (ʻa) continued to cross the (open) desert, moving steadily, neither turning right nor left, all in his deep craving to meet the Messenger of Allah (ṣ), and finally reached Medina. It is said that he met the Prophet (ṣ) at Quba (a place on the outskirts of Medina) while the Prophet (ṣ), through (divine inspiration), had already informed everyone of his arrival.

Imam ‘Ali *(ʿa)* in the light of the Qur’ān

The glorious Qur’ān in most of its verses and explanations has praised the virtues of Amirul Mu’minin (ʿa) and portrayed him as the greatest person in the Islamic world after the Prophet (ṣ). Many (authentic) sources have announced that certainly 300 Qur’ānic verses have been revealed in honour of Imam ‘Ali (ʿa)[1], all praising his virtues and faith.

Here it is pertinent to mention that such a large number of verses have not been revealed in honour of any eminent Islamic personality except ‘Ali (ʿa). The Qur’ānic verses in this regard are divided into different groups.

First group: Those that were revealed specifically in his honour.

Second group: Those revealed in his honour and other eminent members of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa).

Third group: Those revealed in his honour and in the honour of some other prominent chosen ones of his disciples or companions.

Fourth group: Those revealed in his honour, rebuking his opponents and enemies.

Verses revealed exclusively in his honour

“Thou art surely a Warner. And there is a guide for every people.”[2]

Tabari reports that Ibn Abbas said, “When this verse was revealed the Prophet (ṣ) put his hand on his chest and said, “I am a Warner; and for every group of people there is a guide. Then he took hold of ‘Ali’s hand and said, “You are the guide after me; those who will be guided will find guidance[3] through you.”

1- Tarikh Baghdad Vol.6, P.221, Sawa’iqu Muhriqa P.76, Nuru Absar P.76, and etc.
2- Suratu *Ra’d*: 7.
3- Tafsir Tabari Vol.13 P.72 and very close to this in Tafsir Razi, Kanzul Ummal Vol.6 P.157, Tafsiru Haqaiq P.42, Mustadrakul Hakim Vol.3 P.129.

"And that retaining ears might retain it."[1]

Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa) in the interpretation of this verse said: "The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said to me: "I asked my Lord to make it your ear, O 'Ali! So (after that) I did not hear anything from the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) which I forgot."[2]

"Those who spent their wealth by night and day secretly and openly have their reward with their Lord; on them shall come no fear nor shall they grieve."[3]

It happened that Imam 'Ali (ʿa) had four Dirhams; he spent one of them at night and in the day time another one, then he spent one secretly and the last one openly. Then the Prophet (ṣ) said to him "What made you do that?" He (ʿa) said: "In gratitude to Allah for what he has promised me." For that, this verse was revealed in his honour.[4]

"Verily, those who believe and do good works – they are the best of creatures."[5]

Ibn Asakir narrates that Jabir Ibn Abdullah said; "We were with the Prophet (ṣ) when 'Ali (ʿa) approached us. The Prophet (ṣ) declared: "I swear by Him in whose hand my life is, verily this man (i.e. 'Ali (ʿa)) and his Shiites (followers) will be the successful ones on the day of resurrection. Then this holy verse was revealed; and after that episode whenever the companions of the Prophet (ṣ) saw 'Ali (ʿa) approaching they used to say, "The best of creatures has come."[6]

"So ask from the possessor of the Reminder if you know not."[7]

1- Suratul *Haqqa*: 12.
2- Kanzul Ummal Vol.6 P.108, Asbabu Nuzul (Al-Wahai) P.29, Tafsir Tabari Vol.29 P.35, Tafsir Kashshaf Vol.4 P.600, Durru Manthur Vol.8 P.267.
3- Suratu *Baqarah*: 274.
4- Asadul Ghabah Vol.4 P.25, Sawa'iqu Muhriqa P.78, Asbabu Nuzul (Al-Wahai) P.64.
5- Suratu *Bayyina*: 7.
6- Durru Manthur (in the exegesis of this verse) Vol.8 P.589, Tafsir Tabari Vol.30 P.17, Sawa'iqu Muhriqa P.96.
7- Suratu *Nahl*: 43.

Tabari reports that Jabir Aj-Ju'fi said; "When this verse was revealed 'Ali ('a) said: "We are the "Ahlul-Zikr" i.e. the possessor of the Reminder."[1]

"O Messenger! Convey to the people what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord; and if thou do it not, thou hast not conveyed His Message at all. And Allah will protect thee from men."[2]

This verse was revealed to the Prophet (ṣ) at a place called Ghadir Khum when he was returning home from his farewell pilgrimage, *Hajjatul wida*. He was commanded to appoint Imam 'Ali ('a) as his successor and the leader of his Ummah (Community) after him. So he declared:

"Whosoever accepts me as his leader takes 'Ali as his leader. O Allah, befriend him who befriends him and be enemy to him who shows enmity to him, and help him who helps him and disgrace him who seeks to disgrace him." Then Umar stood up and said to him, *"Congratulation O Son of Abu Talib! You have become the leader of every believing man and believing woman."*[3]

"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed upon you My favour, and I am pleased to have chosen Islam as a religion for you."[4]

This holy verse was revealed on the 18th of Zil-Hajja (the last month of the Islamic calendar) after the Prophet (ṣ) had appointed Imam 'Ali ('a) as his successor after him.[5] After the revelation of this verse he declared, "Allah is great for having perfected the religion and completed His favour and being pleased with my messenger ship and the *Wilayah* (leadership) of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib."[6]

1- Tafsir Tabari Vol.8 P.145.
2- Suratu *Maidah*: 67.
3- Asbabu Nuzul P.150, Tarikhu Baghdad Vol.8 P.290, Tafsir Razi Vol.4 P.401, Durru Manthur Vol.6 P.117.
4- Suratu *Maidah*: 3.
5- Tarikhu Baghdad Vol.8 P.19, Durru Manthur Vol.6 P.19.
6- Dalailul Shidaq Vol.2 P.152.

"Verily your guardian *Wali*, is (none else but) God and His apostle (Muhammad) and those who believe, those who establish prayer and give alms while bowing down (in prayer)."[1]

The eminent companion of the Prophet (ṣ), Abu Zarr, in a narration said; "I was praying the Zuhr (afternoon) prayer with the Apostle of God (ṣ), when a beggar came and begged for (alms) in the mosque, but no one gave him anything. So the beggar raised his hands towards heaven and said, "O Allah, bear witness that I asked for something in the Prophet's Mosque but no one gave me anything. At that time, ʿAli (ʿa) was in the bowing position (ruku) of prayer, so he (ʿa) extended the little finger of his right hand for the beggar to remove his ring. The beggar moved towards him and removed the ring while the Prophet (ṣ) watched. He (ṣ) said, O Allah! My brother Musa (ʿa) requested you saying, **"O my Lord expand my heart. In addition, ease my task for me. And loosen the knot (defect) from my tongue, so that they (people) may understand my speech. Appoint for me a deputy from my household, Hārūn, my brother; strengthen my back with him and let him have a share in my task"**[2] and You revealed in the Qur'ān saying: **"We will strengthen thy arm with thy brother and We will give power to you both….."**[3]

"O Allah! I am Muhammad, Your Prophet and Your best and sincere friend, so open my heart and ease my task, and appoint for me a deputy (and helper) from my household, (my brother) 'Ali, and strengthen my back with him."

Abu Zarr said "By God, the Prophet (ṣ) had hardly finished these words when Jibrail (angel Gabriel) descended and said: **"Verily O Muhammad! Read: Verily your guardian is only Allah and his Apostle and those who believe, those who establish prayer and give alms while bowing in prayer."**[4]

1- Suratu *Maidah*: 55.
2- Suratu *Taha*: 25-32.
3- Suratu *Qasas*: 35.
4- Tafsiru Razi Vol.12 P.26, Nuru Absar P.170, Tabari in his Tafsir Vol.6 P.186.

This holy verse has limited the general *Wilayah* (Guardianship) to Allah (swt), His noble Messenger (ṣ), and Amirul Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a). It has been expressed through the plural noun because of its greatness and importance. In addition to the objective nature of the sentence, there is the word *Innama* (only) which is an expression normally used for limiting the act to certain people.

A great and celebrated poet of the early days of Islam Hassaan Ibn Thabit, proving that the holy verse was revealed in the honour of Imam 'Ali ('a) in his poem, said:

"Who gave his ring as alms while bowing (in prayer),

And he kept it secret, a complete secret?"[1]

Verses revealed in honour of the members of the Ahlul-Bayt *('a)*

The Almighty Book (of God i.e. Qur'ān) has dedicated many verses in praise and recognition of the right and honour of the Ahlul-Bayt ('a), including their leader, Amirul Mu'minin ('a):

"Say I do not demand of you any recompense for it (the toil of apostleship) save the love of (my) relatives; and whoso earns a good deed, we give him an increase of good therein. Surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Appreciating." [2]

The majority of commentators of the Qur'an and narrators of the prophetic traditions unanimously agree that "near relatives" (Zil-Qurba) of the Prophet (ṣ), i.e. those whom Allah Almighty has made it compulsory upon His servants to love, refers exclusively to 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husain (May Allah's peace be upon them all). In addition, the meaning of "earning goodness" in the holy verse is to love them and be loyal to them (i.e. recognize their leadership or guardianship). Another aspect of the tradition explains this:

Ibn Abbas narrates that when this verse was revealed they (i.e. the companions) said, "O Messenger of God, who are those of your near

1- Durru Manthur Vol.3 P.106 (Quoting him by expressing its meaning), Al-Kash-Shaf Vol.1 P.692, Dhakairil Uqba P.102, Majma'u Zawa'id Vol.7 P.17, Kanzul Ummal Vol.7 P.305.
2- Suratu *Shura*: 23.

relatives loving whom has been made obligatory upon us?" He (ṣ) said: "'Ali, Fatimah and their two sons."[1]

Jabir Ibn Abdullah said: A village Arab came to the Prophet (ṣ) and said to him: "Show me Islam. He (ṣ) said: Bear witness that there is no God except Allah and He is without partner, and that Muhammad is His Messenger." The village Arab moved forward (closer to the Prophet (ṣ) and said: "Will you ask me for any compensation for it?" He (ṣ) replied: "Nothing except the love for my near relatives." The village Arab asked: My near relatives or your near relatives? The Prophet (ṣ) answered: "Of course, my near relatives." Then the village Arab said: Come closer so that I pay the oath of allegiance to you and pray that the curse of Allah be upon any one who will not love you or love your near relatives. The holy Prophet (ṣ) immediately said "*Ameen.*"[2]

"Thus whoso disputes with you concerning him (Jesus) after what has come to you of knowledge, then say (to him): Come let us summon our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our selves (*Anfusana),* and your selves; then let us pray sincerely and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars."[3]

All the famous commentators of the Qur'an and narrators of the prophetic traditions are unanimous that the holy verse was revealed in honour of Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) i.e. the pure Household of the holy Prophet (ṣ). The verse has expressed the meaning of the word "*Abna ana*" (i.e. our sons) as Hasan and Husain (ʿa) i.e. the two grandsons of the Prophet of Mercy and the two leaders of guidance. While the word "*Nisa ana*" (our women), refers to Az-Zahra (ʿa) the daughter of the Prophet, the leader of the women of the whole world. The word "*Anfusana*" (our selves) refers to Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa), the leader of the pure household of the Prophet (ṣ)."[4]

1- Majma'u Zawa'id Vol.7 P.103, Zakha'iru Aqaba P.25, Nuru Absar P.101, Durru Manthur Vol.7 P.348.

2- Hiliyyatu Awliya'i Vol.3 P.102.

3- Suratu *'Al Imran*: 61.

4- Tafsir Razi Vol.3 P.102, Tafsir Baidari 76. Tafsir Kash-shaf Vol.1 P.49, Tafsir Ruhu Bayan Vol.1 P.457, Tafsir Jalalain Vol.1 P.35, Sahih Muslim Vol.2 P.47,

"Surely there has come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing spoken of…" up to the end of the Surah.

The majority of the commentators of the Qur'an and narrators of the prophetic traditions have confirmed that this (Surah) chapter of the holy Qur'ān was revealed in honour of the Prophet's Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa).[1]

"Verily, Allah intends only to keep off from you all impurity, O members of the Household (of the Prophet) and purify you a thorough purification."[2]

Commentators of the Qur'an and narrators of prophetic traditions unanimously agree upon the fact that the holy verse was revealed in honour of the five members of Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) known as *Ashabul-Kisa*[3] i.e., the companions of the cloak. They are the leaders of all creatures. The Messenger of God (ṣ); one whose discourse is identical to his course i.e. Imam Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa); one who is part and parcel of him i.e. the pious leader of the women of the whole universe (Lady Fatimah) (ʿa); his two dear ones "Raihan" i.e. Hasan and Husain (ʿa) leaders of the youths of Paradise. No one else shared this great honour with them.

This claim is supported by notable prophetic traditions from the *Sihah*, some of which are as follows:

First Hadith - The great and pious Lady (wife of the Prophet (ṣ) Umme Salama said, "This verse was revealed in my house and in it were Fatima, Hasan, Husain and ʿAli (ʿa). The Prophet (ṣ) covered them with a Kisa (Cloak) that was with him and then declared "O

Sahih Tirmizi Vol.2 P.166, Sunani Baihaqi Vol. 7 P. 63, Musnad Ahmad ibn Hambali Vol.1 P.185, Musabihi Sunna (Al-Baqwi) Vol.2 P.201, Sairi A'alamin Nubala'i Vol.3 P.193.

1- Tafsir Razi Vol.10 P.243, Asbabu Nuzul P.133, Ruhul-Bayan Vol.6 P.546, Yanabii'ul-Mawadda Vol.1 P.93, Ar-Riyadun-Nadra Vol.2 P.227, Imta'i-al-Asma'i Vol.2 P.502.

2- Suratul-*Ahzab*: 33.

3- Tafsir Razi Vol.6 P.783, Sahih Muslim Vol.2 P.331, Al-Khasa'isul-Kubra Vol. 2 P.264, Ar-Riyadun Nadra Vol.2 P.188, Tafsir Ibn Jaril Vol.22 P.5, Musnad Ahmad ibn Hambali Vol.4 P.107, Sunanul-Baihaqi Vol.2 P.150, Mushkilu Athar Vol.1 P.334, Khasa'isu Nisai P.33.

It is pertinent to remark here that Ibn Jarir in his Tafsir has narrated 15 traditions with different chains that confine this verse exclusively to the Ahlul-Bayt (as).

Allah! These are my Ahlul-Bayt (Household), so keep off from them impurity and purify them completely." He (ṣ) kept on repeating this dua (supplication) while Umme Salama heard and watched; then she said, "Am I (also) with you people, O Messenger of God?" Then she raised the *Kisa* so that she could enter but he (gently) withdrew it from her and said, "Verily you are on the right path."[1]

Second Hadith - Ibn Abbas narrated, I witnessed that the Messenger of God (ṣ), for seven months regularly went at prayer time to the door of ʻAli ibn Abi Talib every day and said: "Peace be upon you and may Allah's Mercy and blessings be upon you O Ahlul-Bayt. **Verily, Allah intends only to remove from you uncleanliness, O members of the Household and to purify you a thorough purification.** As-Salat! (Prayers) May Allah be merciful to you". He repeated this five times daily."[2]

Third Hadith - Abu Barzatu narrates that: "I prayed together with the Prophet (ṣ) for seven months. (During this period I noticed that) the Prophet (ṣ) came out of his house and stopped at the door of Fatima (ʿa) and said, **"**Peace be upon you. **Verily Allah intends only to remove from you impurity, O members of the Household and to purify you a thorough purification."**[3]

Actually the Prophet (ṣ) was doing this in order to show his community the importance of following his Ahlul-Bayt and oblige them to follow them for they would be the guides to lead the Ummah to what would benefit them in their progress and development both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Verses revealed in honour of Imam ʻAli *(ʿa)* and the chosen companions of the Prophet *(ṣ)*

There are some verses of the Glorious Qur'ān revealed in honour of Imam ʻAli (ʿa), together with some great personalities of Islam, who were his chosen companions. Some of them are the following:

1- Mustadrakul Hakim Vol.2 P.416, Asadul Ghabah Vol.5 P.521.
2- Darrul Manthur Vol.5 P.199.
3- Dakhairu Aqaba P.24.

1. Allah (swt) has said, **"And on the elevated places there shall be men who will recognize everyone by their marks."**[1]

Ibn Abbas narrates that; "*A'araf* is an elevated place on the *Sirat* (a bridge) that everyone must cross on the Day of Judgment where there will be Abbas, Hamza, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and Ja'far, the possessor of two wings. They will know all their followers from the brightness on their faces, and their enemies from the darkness on their faces."[2]

2. Allah (swt) says: "Among the believers are men who have been true to the covenant they made with Allah. There are (some) of them who have fulfilled their vow and some who still wait and they have not changed (their condition) in the least."[3]

Amirul Mu'minin ('a), while on the pulpit, was questioned about this verse, and he said; "O Allah! I seek forgiveness. It was revealed in my honour, my uncle Hamza, and my cousin Ubaida Ibn Harith. As for Ubaida he had fulfilled his vow as a martyr on the day of Badr, and Hamza his vow as a martyr on the day of Uhud, but as for me, I am waiting for the most wretched of them who will colour my beard with blood from my head." [4]

Verses revealed in his praise which also rebuke his opponents

There are many famous verses of the Glorious Qur'ān that were revealed in his honour, simultaneously rebuking his foes or those who opposed him or tried to diminish or defame his (great) merits and virtues:

1. Allah the Most High says:

"Do you hold the giving of drink to the pilgrims, and the maintenance of the sacred mosque as (equal to the works of) him who believes in Allah and the Last Day and strives (Jihad) in the

1- Suratul *A'araf*: 46.
2- Sawa'iqu Muhriqa P.101.
3- Suratul *Ahzab*: 23.
4- Sawa'iqu Muhriqa P.80, Nur al-Absar P.80.

path of Allah? They are not at all equal in the sight of Allah. And Allah guides not the unjust people."[1]

This verse was revealed in connection with what ensued between Amirul Mu'minin and Abbas and Talha when they proudly expressed their services to Islam in the presence of Imam 'Ali (ʿa). Talha said, "I am the keeper of the house (of God), its keys are in my hands, so is the covering cloth or outer garment of the house with me." Then Abbas proudly remarked: "I am the one in charge of providing drinks (to the pilgrims) and its maintenance lies with me; then Imam 'Ali (ʿa) said: "I don't know what you people are saying. I have prayed facing the Qibla for six months before any other people (companions), and I am the Man of *Jihad* (holy war)." This verse was then revealed.[2]

2. Furthermore, Allah the Most Exalted says:

"Is he then who is a believer like one who is disobedient? They are not equal."[3]

This verse was revealed in honour of Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa) rebuking Walid Ibn Uqba Ibn Abi Muiit, who had proudly remarked before the Imam (ʿa): "I am more fluent in speech than you and smarter than you in spears (in battlefields), and better than you in repulsing cavalry (of the enemy during wars)." Then Imam 'Ali said to him: Be quiet! You are nothing but a *Fasiq* (i.e. one who disobeys Allah's law openly). Then Allah (swt) revealed this verse.[4]

Imam 'Ali *(ʿa)* in prophetic traditions

Sources of hadith like *Sihah* and *Sunani* are full of luminous traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) in honour of Imam 'Ali (ʿa). These traditions expound the great and high virtues, coupled with Islamic justice of the Imam (ʿa), raising him to the highest peak of Islamic society.

1- Suratul *Bara'a* (*Tauba*): 19.
2- Tafsir Tabari Vol.10 P.68, Tafsir Razi Vol.16 P.11, Darr Manthur Vol.3 P.146, Asbab Nuzul (Al-Wahidy) P.182.
3- Suratu *Sajada*: 18.
4- Tafsir Tabari Vol.21 P.68, Asbab Nuzul (Al-Wahidy) P.263, Tarikh Baghdad Vol.13 P.321, Ar-Raiyadi Nadra Vol.2 P.206.

What is worth considering in the great multitude of traditions is their being popular and widespread among narrators. This shows the purpose and the desired aim which the Prophet (ṣ) attached to it (i.e. the appointment and nomination of Imam ʻAli (ʻa) for Khilafat (Leadership) after him). Thus, he would serve as the Caliph and final authority to which the community could refer to after him, to fulfill their needs and rectify their affairs in both the worldly and religious matters. In addition, he would lead their lives towards the right destination so that there would be no complaint from any one. All this was an effort to make the Islamic community an ideal for all people and nations on earth.

In any case, when we look at the Prophetic traditions we find that there are some that are exclusively for him, while there are some that are exclusively for the virtues and merits of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʻa), which automatically include him for he is the leader of the *Itrat* (Prophet's near relatives). The following are indications to that effect:

First group of traditions: These are manifestations -in various ways- of Imam ʻAli's (ʻa) grandeur, honour, nobility and virtue. His position vis-à-vis the Prophet (ṣ):

Imam ʻAli (ʻa) was the closest, among all men, to the Prophet (ṣ) in terms of kinship or association. He was the father of his two grand sons i.e. Hasan and Husain (ʻa), the gate of the city of his knowledge whom the Prophet (ṣ) loved.

Some traditions received from him (ṣ) show his deep love and affection for him i.e. ʻAli (ʻa). Here are some of them:

1. Imam ʻAli *(ʻa)* being the self of the Prophet *(ṣ)*

The verse of Malediction (Mubahala) vividly shows that Imam ʻAli (ʻa) is the self of the Prophet (ṣ). We have dealt with this previously. The Prophet (ṣ) had declared in some traditions that Imam ʻAli is *Nafsihi* (i.e. himself). Here are some of them:

"Walid Ibn Uqba, Usman's maternal brother informed the Prophet (ṣ) that the tribe of *Bani Wali'ati* had denounced Islam. The Prophet (ṣ) became unhappy (on hearing this). He then said, "*Banu Wali'ati* must either refrain (from their action) or else I will certainly send to them a man who is like me i.e. *Ka nafsi*. He will kill their fighters and take their

children as prisoners, and here he is," while he touched 'Ali's shoulder[1], (showing him to the people).

Amr Ibn Aas narrates (a tradition) saying: "When I returned from the battle of *Zatas-Silaas* I was thinking that no one was dearer in love to the Prophet (ṣ) than me, so I said to him: O Messenger of Allah, who among people do you love best? (In reply) he mentioned some people, then I said; O Messenger of Allah, what about 'Ali? The Prophet (ṣ) turned towards his companions and said; "This man is asking me about myself (nafsi)."" [2]

2. Imam 'Ali *('a)* being the brother of the Prophet *(ṣ)*

The Prophet (ṣ) announced publicly (in front of his companions) that verily Imam 'Ali ('a) was his brother. In fact there are many traditions to this effect, some of which are as follows:

Tirmizi reports through his own chain from Abi Umar who said, The Prophet (ṣ) established a fraternal relationship between his companions (by joining every two of them as brothers). Imam 'Ali ('a) came, with tears in his eyes, and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! You have joined every one of your companions to one another as brothers but you have not joined me to anyone as brother.' Then the Prophet (ṣ) said to him "You are my brother in this World and in the Hereafter."

Indeed the fraternal relationship between the Prophet (ṣ) and Imam 'Ali ('a) was not limited to this world only but it extended to the Hereafter, which is eternal.

Anas Ibn Malik narrates that: The Prophet (ṣ) climbed the pulpit and made a speech. At the end of his sermon, he said, "Where is 'Ali ibn Abi Talib? Imam 'Ali ('a) (quickly) stood up and moved towards him saying, "Here I am, O Messenger of Allah". Then he (s) embraced him and kissed him on the brow between his two eyes. Then he said, raising his voice – ***"O you assembly of Muslims, this is my brother,***

1- Majma Zawaid Vol.7 P.110. Walid's news about bani Waki'a's becoming disbelievers in Islam was a lie, so the following verse was revealed: "O you who believe! If an unrighteous person brings you any news, ascertain the correctness of the report fully, lest you harm a people in ignorance…" Suratu Hujurat verse 6.
2- Kanzul Ummal Vol.6 P.400.

and the son of my uncle, my son-in-law, my flesh, my blood, my heir, and the father of my two grandsons, Hasan and Husain, the leaders of the youths of paradise."[1]

Ibn Umar in his narration said: "I heard the Prophet (ṣ) during the Fare-well pilgrimage (Hajjatul wida) saying this. While sitting on his camel he took hold of 'Ali's shoulder and said: "O Allah bear witness… O Allah I have delivered the message (concerning) this my brother, my cousin, my son-in-law and the father of my two sons. O Allah whosoever shows him enmity cast him into Hell fire."[2]

3. The Prophet *(ṣ)* and Imam 'Ali *(ʿa)* were from the same tree

The Prophet (ṣ) had announced publicly that verily he and Imam 'Ali (ʿa) were from the same tree. Many traditions of this category were received from him, and here are some of them:

Jabir Ibn Abdullah narrates: "I heard the Prophet (ṣ) saying to 'Ali (ʿa): "O 'Ali! People are from different trees, but I and you are from the same tree." Then the Prophet (ṣ) recited this verse of the Qur'ān:

"And gardens of vines and cornfields, and date-palms, growing together from one root and others, not growing as much; they are watered with the same water."[3]

The Prophet (ṣ) said; "'Ali and I are from the same tree and (other) people are from different trees."[4]

What a great and grand tree indeed it was from which had emerged the leader of (all) created things and the pioneer of human civilization, the Messenger of God (ṣ) and the gate of the city of his knowledge Imam 'Ali (ʿa). Indeed, it is this blessed tree whose root is firm and its branches reach into the heavens; and, which has produced in all generations fruit which has been of benefit to mankind.

1- Zakhair Uqba P.92.
2- Kanzul Ummal Vol. 3 P.61.
3- Suratu *R'ad*: 4, Kanzul Haqaiq P.155.
4- Kanzul Ummal Vol.6 P.154.

4. Imam ‘Ali *(ʿa)* as the Prophet’s deputy “Wazir”

The Prophet (ṣ) has greatly stressed in most of his sayings that undoubtedly Imam (ʿa) was his “Wazir” (deputy or helper). We hereby quote some of them:

Asma’u bint Umais said, I heard the Prophet (ṣ) saying; “O Allah, I am repeating the request of my brother Musa (ʿa), O Allah, appoint for me a “Wazir” (deputy) from my family; my brother ‘Ali. Strengthen my back with him, make him share my affairs in order that we may glorify Thee abundantly and remember You much. Verily You keep watch over us.”[1]

5. Imam ‘Ali *(ʿa)* as the successor of the Prophet *(ṣ)*

The Prophet (ṣ) had announced the successor-ship of Imam ‘Ali after him right from the early days of his Islamic call. That was when he (ṣ) invited all the family members of the Quraish to embrace Islam. At the end of this call, he said to the people of Quraish “‘Ali is my brother, my executor and successor among you, therefore, listen to him and obey him.”[2]

Undoubtedly the Prophet (ṣ) had combined the successor-ship of Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) after him with his call to Islam and denounced the worship of idols. In addition, there are many prophetic traditions in which the Prophet (ṣ) publicly announced the “Caliphate” (successor ship or leadership) of Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) after him. Here are some of them:

A quotation from the Prophet (ṣ) says; O ‘Ali you are my successor over my “Ummah” (community)!”[3]

The Prophet (ṣ) also said; ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib is the first of all men to (embrace) Islam and the most knowledgeable of them, and he is the “Imam” (leader) and successor after me.”[4]

1- Riyadu Nadra Vol.2 P.163.
2- Tarikh Tabari Vol.2 P.127, Tarikh ibn Athir Vol.2 P.22, Tarikh Abi Fada’u Vol.1 P.116, Musnad Ahmad Vol.1 P.331, Kanzul Ummal Vol.6 399.
3- Muraj’aat P.208.
4- Masdar Mutaqaddim P.209.

6. Imam ‘Ali *(ʿa)* is to the Prophet what Hārūn was to Musa *(ʿa)*

Many Prophetic traditions were received from the Prophet (ṣ) all of which are of the same content and meaning that he (ṣ) said to ‘Ali (ʿa): “You are in the same position to me as Hārūn (ʿa) was to Musa (ʿa).” We hereby quote some of them:

“The Prophet (ṣ) said to ‘Ali (ʿa): Are you not pleased to be for me what Hārūn was to Musa? Except that there shall be no prophet after me.”[1]

Sayyid Ibn Musayyib narrates from Amir Ibn Sa’ad Ibn Abi Waqqas, from his father Sa’ad, who said “The Prophet (ṣ) said to ‘Ali (ʿa): “You are to me what Hārūn was to Musa except that there is no prophet after me.” Sayyid said “I wanted to inform Sa’ad of it so I went to meet him. I told him what Amir had told me, and then he said, ’I have also heard it’ and I said ‘Really, have you also heard it?’ Then he put his fingers in his two ears and said, ‘Yes, if not, then these two are deaf.’” [2]

7. Imam ‘Ali *(ʿa)* being the gate of the city of knowledge

This was among the ways through which the Prophet (ṣ) used to upgrade the position of ‘Ali (ʿa) to a grand and immense status. He (ṣ) made him the gate to the city of his knowledge. This tradition has been transmitted through innumerable chains and attained the degree of certainty in its chains of authority. This hadith had been quoted from the Prophet (ṣ) on many occasions. Some of them are related below:

Jabir Ibn Abdullah reported that, on the day of Hudaibiyya I heard the Prophet (ṣ) saying while holding ‘Ali’s hand, “This is the leader of the *Barara* (righteous ones), and the fighter against corrupt people; he is helped who helps him and disgraced who disgraces him.” He raised his voice loudly saying, “I am the city of knowledge and ‘Ali is its

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1- Musnad Abi Dawud Vol.1 P.29. Hiliyyatu Awliya’u Vol.7 P.195, Mushil Aathaar Vol. 2 P.309, Musnad Ahmad ibn Hambal Vol.1 P.182, Tarikh Baghdad Vol.11 P.432, Khasaisu Nisai P.16.

2- Asadul Ghabah Vol.3 P.26, Khasais Nisai P.15, Sahih Muslim, the chapter about the companions Vol.7 P.120.

gate, whosoever intends (to enter) the house should come through its door."[1]

Ibn Abbas reports that the Prophet (ṣ) said; "I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate and whoever intends to come to the city should come to it through its gate."[2]

He (ṣ) also said: "'Ali is the door of my knowledge, the explainer of what I have been sent with to my community after me. Loving him is Faith and hating him is hypocrisy and looking at him is compassion."[3]

Undoubtedly Imam 'Ali (ʿa) is the gate of the city of the Prophet's (ṣ) knowledge, therefore whatever comes from him of religious teachings, "Sharia" laws, noble character and good manners all emerge from the Prophet (ṣ) and it is obligatory to adhere to them without question.

Verily the Prophet (ṣ) left behind springs of knowledge that consolidate life with wisdom and progress. This he deposited with Imam 'Ali (ʿa), so that the *Ummah* (community) could get it from him, but malice and envy towards Imam 'Ali (ʿa) from the Quraish shut the windows of this (divine) light and deprived the Ummah from benefiting from it, leaving The latter lingering in ignorance.

8. Imam 'Ali *(ʿa)* is like all the Prophets *(ʿa)*

Once the Prophet (ṣ), while in the company of some of his companions, said to them; "If you wish to see Adam's knowledge, Noah's persistence, Ibrahim's good virtues, Musa's secret counsels (with God), Isa (Jesus) in his age and Muhammad's guidance and forbearance, then he should look at this (person) coming". They all turned to look at the person and they suddenly saw that it was Imam 'Ali (ʿa)."

A great poet, Abu Abdullah Al-Mufaja'a, in his poem called *Usama*, has related many of 'Ali's (ʿa) virtues and his merits. He says:

O ye who rebuke me for my loving 'Ali;

1- Tarikh Baghdad Vol.2 P.377.
2- Kanzul Ummal Vol.6 P.301.
3- Kanzul Ummal vol.6 P.156, Sawa'iqul Muhriqa P.73.

Go to hell, blamed and disgraced

Do you oppose the best of (Allah's) favours?

You are astray and still in the state of ignorance;

Best in resemblance to the Prophet as a baby as a child

As a child after being weaned, while being breastfed

And a nourishing foetus (in the womb);

He was in knowledge, like Adam, when he learnt

The details of the hidden names;

Like Noah, who found salvation from damnation;

The day (his ship) landed on (the hill of) Judiyya.

9. Love for 'Ali is faith while hatred for him is hypocrisy

The Prophet (ṣ) had publicly declared that love for 'Ali (ʿa) is faith and piety, while hatred for him is hypocrisy and disobedience (to Allah), and here are some of the narrations from him:

'Ali (ʿa) said: "I swear by He Who has sent the Prophet (ṣ) with the truth that the Prophet (ṣ) declared to me that no one would love me except a true believer and that no one would hate me except a hypocrite."[1]

Al-Musawir Al-Humairi narrates from his mother who said: I went to Ummi Salama and I heard her saying that the Prophet (ṣ) used to say: "No hypocrite would love 'Ali (ʿa) and no true believer would hate 'Ali (ʿa).[2]

Ibn Abbas narrates; The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) looked at 'Ali (ʿa) and declared; "No one loves you except a believer and no one hates you except a hypocrite. Whosoever loves you indeed loves me and

1- Sahih Tirmizi Vol.2 P.301, Sahih Ibn Maja P.12, Tarikh Baghdad Vol.2 P.255, Hiliyyatu Awaliya'i Vol.4 P.185.
2- Sahih Tirmizi Vol.2 P.299.

whosoever hates you indeed hates me; who loves me loves Allah who hates me hates Allah; Woe to him who hates you after me."[1]

Abu Saeed Al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet (ṣ) said to ʻAli (ʿa): "Loving you is faith, while hatred for you is hypocrisy and the first person who would enter paradise is the one who loves you while the first to enter Hell-fire is the one who hates you."[2]

These traditions were commonly circulated among the companions of the Prophet (ṣ) so that they used to practice these traditions by describing whoever loved Imam ʻAli (ʿa) as having faith and whoever hated him as a hypocrite. The eminent and famous companion, Abu Zarr Al-Ghaffari, said: "We did not know the hypocrites except through their denying God and His Messenger, their non attendance of prayers and their hatred for Imam ʻAli (ʿa)."[3]

The great companion of the Prophet (ṣ), Jabir Ibn Abdullahi Al-Ansari, said, "We never used to recognize the hypocrites except through their hatred for ʻAli ibn Abi Talib."[4]

Second group of the traditions:

There are some traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) concerning the position of Imam ʻAli (ʿa) in the sight of Allah (swt) which He (i.e. Allah (swt) has prepared for him.

Imam ʻAli's *(ʿa)* position in the Hereafter

Some groups of Ahadith of the Prophet (ṣ) have discussed the different kinds of honours conferred on Imam ʻAli (ʿa) in the next world. Here are some of them:

1. Imam ʻAli *(ʿa)* the flag bearer of the banner of *Hamd* (Praise)

Numerous and authentic narratives have been received from the Prophet (ṣ) which indicate that on the day of Resurrection, Allah Almighty will bestow on Imam ʻAli (ʿa) the honour of bearing the

1- Majma'u Zawa'id Vol.9 P.133.
2- Nuru Absar (Ashablanjiy): 72.
3- Mustadraku Hakim Vol.3 P.129.
4- Al-Isti'ab Vol.2 P.464.

banner of praise. What a great gift that nobody has had before him! In a narration the Prophet (ṣ) said to ʻAli (ʻa): "You will be in front of me on the Day of Judgment. The banner of praise will be given to me and I will pass it to you. And you will be the one who will turn some people away from my pond."[1]

2. Imam ʻAli *(ʻa)* the caretaker of the Prophet's *(ṣ)* pond

Numerous traditions have been reported from the Prophet (ṣ) which show that Imam ʻAli (ʻa) will be in charge of the Prophet's (ṣ) pond on the Day of Judgment. It is the largest river in Paradise and the best in its good taste, sweetness, beautiful scenery and outlook. No one will drink from it except he who loves Imam ʻAli (ʻa) and recognizes him as his leader and master. Let us have a look at some of the traditions reported concerning this:

The Prophet (ṣ) said; "'Ali ibn Abi Talib is in charge of my pond on the Day of Resurrection, therein are cups whose numbers are equal to that of the heavenly stars. The vastness of my pond is like what is between *Al-Jaabiya* and *San'aa* (Yemen)."[2]

Imam ʻAli *(ʻa)* is the distributor of Paradise and Hell-fire

Among the honourable titles that the Messenger of God (ṣ) has given to the Gate of the city of knowledge, (ʻAli (ʻa) is the Distributor of Paradise and Hell. Ibn Hijr reports that Imam ʻAli (ʻa) addressed the members of the parliament appointed by Umar saying: "Fear God and tell me the truth; is there any one of you that the Prophet (ṣ) addressed saying: You are the Distributor of Paradise and Hell on the Day of Resurrection other than me?" They answered: "By Allah, none."

Ibn Hijr then added some commentaries on this tradition saying that its meaning is shown in what has been narrated from Imam Rida (ʻa): "You are the distributor of paradise and hell on the day of resurrection, you will say to hell-fire: "This is for me and that is for you."[3]

1- Kanzul Ummal Vol.6 P.400.
2- Majma'u Zawa'id Vol.1 P.367.
3- Sawa'iqu Muhriqa: 75.

Significantly, it is worth knowing that no one among saints or Gnostics has ever reached this great and unlimited honour which Imam ʻAli (ʿa) has acquired, neither before nor after Islam. Allah (swt) has bestowed it on him because of his struggle, effort and fight for the cause of Islam; his going against his personal wishes and (indulging) totally in the service of the truth.

Prophetic traditions on the virtues of The Ahlul-Bayt *(ʿa)* {progeny of the Prophet *(ṣ)*}

There are many traditions reported from the Prophet (ṣ) concerning the merits and virtues of his pure progeny and the obligation of loving them and adhering to them. Here are some of them:

The tradition of the two heavy weights

The tradition is among the most magnificent traditions of the prophetic traditions and most authentic with regards to its chains; it is also among the most common and most circulated among Muslims. Both *Sihah* and *Sunani* have recorded it while great scholars have accepted and acknowledged it. It is pertinent to mention here that the apostle of God (ṣ) has mentioned this tradition on many occasions and among them is:

Zaid Ibn Arqam reports that the Prophet (ṣ) said; "I am leaving among you two heavy things which if you hold fast to you will never go astray after me. One is greater than the other; Allah's book, which is (like) a rope extending from the heavens to the earth, and the progeny of my household. The two will never be separated until they come to me at the pond. Be careful of your behaviour towards them after me."[1]

The Prophet (ṣ) publicly announced this hadith at *Arafat* while on pilgrimage. Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari has narrated it saying I saw the Apostle of God (ṣ) while he was on pilgrimage on the day of *Arafa*. He was on his camel delivering a sermon (to the people). I heard him saying; "O people, verily I have left among you that which

1- Sahih Tirmizi Vol. 2 P. 308.

if you hold fast to you will never go astray, (they are) the Book of Allah and the progeny of my household."[1]

The Prophet (ṣ) addressed his companions while on his death bed and said:

"O ye people! I am about to die very soon and will be taken away, I have indeed uttered something to you that is grievious, for that, excuse me. I am leaving behind the Book of Allah the Most Great and Mighty, and the progeny of my household."

Then he took hold of the hand of 'Ali (ʿa) and said: "And this 'Ali is with the Qur'ān and the Qur'ān is with him, the two will never part until they come to me at the pond."[2]

The tradition of the Ark

Abu Saeed Khudri narrated that: I heard the Prophet (ṣ) saying: "The similitude of my Household among you is like the Ark of Noah; whosoever boards it is safe and whosoever remains behind it is drowned. The similitude of my Household among you is like the gate of *Hitta* (forgiveness) among the children of Israel; whosoever enters it is forgiven."

This noble tradition shows the necessity of holding fast to the pure progeny of the Prophet (ṣ), because there is salvation in it for the *Ummah* (Islamic nation) and safety from drowning in the confusions of this life. Therefore, the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) symbolise the Ark of salvation and security for the servants (of God).

Imam Sharafud-Din, may Allah make well his resting place, said: "What is meant by their being the similitude to the Ark of Noah is that whosoever turns to them in the two worlds would be saved (from drowning). Indeed whosoever takes his *Furu* (practical laws) and his *Usul* (fundamental principles) from the holy Imams is saved from Hell-fire. Whosoever doesn't follow them would be like that (person) who took to the mountain-top on the day of the *Tufan* (Noah's flood) thinking that it could protect him from the punishment of God, but nay,

1- Sahih Tirmizi Vol. 2 P. 308, Kanzul Ummal Vol. 1 P. 84
2- Sawa'iqu Muhriqa: 75.

that person was drowned in the water (flood) and such a person is in *Hamin* (Hell-fire). We seek refuge with Allah (swt) against that."

The common thing shared by comparing them with the door or gate of *Hitta* (forgiveness) of the children of Israel is that Allah (swt) wanted a manifestation of humbleness and submission to His laws, so he commanded Bani Israel to pass through the door of forgiveness so that they could be forgiven. Similarly, if they follow the Holy Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) they would be forgiven.

Ibn Hijr made an effort to stress this point by saying: "The point of similitude in comparing them with the Ark of Noah is that whosoever loves and respects them sincerely as a sign of gratitude to Allah for His favours upon him would gain salvation from the darkness of ignorance through their grace and guidance. Whosoever stays behind (i.e. the Ark) would be drowned in ignorance because of his ingratitude to Allah's bounties and thus perish in the same returning place of tyrants. The point of similitude between them (the Ahlul-Bayt) and the gate of repentance is that Allah (swt) has made humbleness and seeking of Allah's forgiveness a condition for entering that gate, that is the gate of *Arihan* or *Baitul-Muqaddas* (the holy Mosque at Palestine), and Allah (swt) has made love for the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) as a foundation for that forgiveness and security."

Ahlul-Bayt *(ʿa)* as security for the Ummah (Islamic nation)

The Prophet (ṣ) had made the love of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) compulsory upon his Ummah, and had assured it that adhering to them was security from destruction and discord. He has been quoted as saying: "The stars are security for the people of the earth from drowning, and my Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) are security for my nation against discord. If one of the Arab tribes goes against the remaining tribes then they would all be divided into factions and become the party of *Iblis* (the devil)."

Imam ʿAli *(ʿa)* was always with the Prophet *(ṣ)* in his Jihad (Holy Wars)

The Prophet (ṣ) commenced his call by taking positive steps towards peace by liberating humanity from the woes of wars. His radiant call started in Mecca, the headquarters of ignorance of the Arab world, represented by the Quraish whose thought and action were based on

ignorance, arrogance and egoism. They puffed up their noses and started attacking the call and struggle of the Prophet (ṣ). They tortured all those who believed in his message so much so, that they were forced to migrate to *Habasha* (Ethiopia) in order to avoid the high-handedness and persecutions of the Quraish. As for the Prophet (ṣ), he had taken refuge with his uncle, the respected elder of the Arabs and his son Imam ʻAli. Since the Prophet (ṣ) could not find (a similar) pillar to rely upon after the death of his uncle, so the Quraish gathered and decided to kill him, he migrated to *Yathrib* (Medina). There he found that the people were ready and eager to protect him and his religion. They all responded positively to help him against the Quraish.

This aroused the wrath of the Quraish. They became frightened and terrified, therefore they made an agreement and concluded that they had to wage war against him (ṣ). Leaving no stone unturned, they gathered all their economic resources and might in order to attack the Prophet (ṣ).

Amirul Mu'minin stood firmly by the side of the Prophet (ṣ) like a defence shield, and protected him in all the battles that the Quraish had waged so far. The Prophet (ṣ) had made him the commander-in-chief of his all his armies. Bellow are some of the accounts of battles that Imam ʻAli (ʻa) fought together with the Prophet (ṣ).

1. The battle of Badr

The battle of Badr was a glorious and open victory for the Muslims and Islam; and it was indeed a deadly blow to *Shirk* (Polytheism).

Allah (swt) upgraded the honour of His Servant and Messenger, Muhammad (ṣ) with it, humiliated his enemies and defeated his opponents. The most prominent hero of that battle was Imam ʻAli (ʻa). whose sword alone killed many polytheists and the worst deniers of Allah (swt). His great valour, strong will and determination was beyond description, so much so that Jibrail (ʻa) (Angel Gabriel) called

(from the heavens): "There is no sword except Zul-Fiqaar (the name of 'Ali's sword) and no young (brave) man except 'Ali."[1]

We have discussed events of this battle particularly the positive role that the Imam (ʿa) played, in detail, in the second volume of the book *Mausu'at Imam Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa)*.

2. The battle of Uhud

The Quraish received the bad news of their terrible defeat and great loss in the battle of Badr with deep sorrow and grief. The mother of Mu'awiyya, Hind, was most distressed and unhappy. She prevented men and women from weeping over their fallen heroes in the battle of Badr so that the tragic grief would remain fresh in their minds until they took revenge from their killers.

Abu Sufiyan was the leader and commander-in-chief of the Quraish in the battle of Uhud. He was the one urging and instigating the people to come out and fight the Apostle of Allah (ṣ). He was in charge of collecting money, buying weapons and making necessary preparations for the war. The Quraish positively responded to his call to fight the Prophet (ṣ) with all their strength. They came out with might and determination to fight with their slaves and women, so that no one would remain behind. Hind led the women and they beat drums chanting war slogans.

The infidel forces numbered three thousand, while the Muslim forces numbered seven hundred only. Talha ibn Abi Talha led the forces of the infidels holding their battle flag, saying, "O companions of Muhammad, you claim that Allah would send us to Hell-fire by your swords and would send you to paradise by our swords. Who among you will dare challenge to fight me?"

The hero of Islam, Imam 'Ali (ʿa), came forward to confront him. He sent a swift stroke that cut off his legs and made him fall on the ground. While cleaning blood from his body, he (i.e. Talha bn Abi Talha) begged him in the name of Allah to pardon his life so, Imam

1- Kanzul Ummal Vol.3 P.154.

ʻAli (ʻa) left him alone without putting an end to his life, but he died due to excessive bleeding.

The Muslims were relieved over his death, while on the other side the infidels were grieved at and weakened by his death. After him the great heroes of Quraish took the banner one after the other but ʻAli (ʻa) confronted them one by one and killed them by cutting off their heads with his sword. Hind, the mother of Mu'awiyya, was busy stirring up courage in the hearts of the Quraish troops, urging them to fight the Muslims. Whenever any man among them was defeated, she would throw a *Mukhlula* i.e. Kohol (antimony) container with its stick to him and address him saying; "You are nothing but a woman, so go and make your face up with this."[1]

Regrettable indeed is that the Muslims suffered a disastrous defeat and great loss that was about to fold up the banner of Islam. This was because of the carelessness of some Muslim soldiers in obeying the war commandments that the Prophet (ṣ) had ordered them to observe. He stationed a battalion of spear-men and archers on the mountain by-pass under the leadership of Abdullah Ibn Jabir[2] so that they could guard the Muslims from behind. He (ṣ) warned them seriously not to leave their positions under all circumstances. The arrow-shooters directed their arrows and spears towards the centre of the Quraish army which lowered their morale, so they fled leaving behind their possessions and weapons. Then the Muslims soldiers advanced towards the spoils of the war. When the archers (at the hill-pass) saw this, some of them left their positions and went down to take their share of the booty disobeying the Prophet's (s) stern orders that they should remain in their positions what ever be the case. When Khalid Ibn Walid the leader of the infidel soldiers saw that some of the Muslim archers had left their positions, he attacked the remaining archers on the hill and killed them. He then launched another attack on the companions of the Prophet (ṣ) from behind and killed some of them. The infidel soldiers killed many of the Muslim commanders in this attack.

1- Mizan Vol.4 P.12.
2- Siratu Nabawiyya Vol.2 P.68.

Imam ‘Ali’s protection for the Prophet *(ṣ)*

This disastrous and tragic defeat of the Muslim soldiers made them flee with humiliation. Their faces showed signs of obvious fear and terror. They fled and left the Prophet (ṣ) alone while the enemies surrounded him. He (ṣ) was seriously injured after which he fell into a concealed pit dug by Abu Amir so that the Muslims could fall into it unaware. Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) was beside the Prophet (ṣ) so he (ṣ) took hold of his hand while Talha Ibn Abdullah raised him until he was upright on his feet.[1] The Prophet (ṣ) then looked at Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) and said to him: “O ‘Ali what have the people done?” He answered him with sorrow and bitterness saying: “They broke their pledge and turned their backs.”

A battalion of forces from the Quraish launched an attack on the Prophet (ṣ) which worsened the situation and made it very tense and unbearable for them. Thereafter, the Prophet (ṣ) said to ‘Ali (ʿa) “Go and deal with them for me”. Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) who was on foot attacked them and uprooted them. He killed four sons of Abu Sufyan, Ibn Auf and six soldiers from that troop. He (ʿa) succeeded in dispersing them from around the holy Prophet (ṣ) after a strenuous effort. Then another troop in which there was Hisham Ibn Ummayya attacked the Prophet (ṣ), but Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) killed him as a result of which the troop fled away. Then another troop attacked the Prophet (ṣ) and among them was Bashir Ibn Malik, but Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) also killed him, turning the troops on their backs, dispersed and defeated. This work of Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) really amazed and impressed Jibrail {Angel Gabriel (ʿa)} who commented: “Verily, the Angels were truly surprised at this support and assistance (of Imam ‘Ali)”. The Prophet (ṣ) said to Jibrail (ʿa), “What can prevent him from doing so while he is from me and I am from him?” Jibrail (ʿa) said “And I am from you both.”[2]

Imam ‘Ali continued to be brave and powerful in defending the Messenger of God (ṣ). He sustained sixteen serious injuries. Each blow made him fall to the ground while Jibrail (ʿa) was responsible for lifting him up.[3]

1- Masdar Mutaqaddim P.74.
2- Hayatu Imam Amirul Mu’minin (as) Vol.2 P.20.
3- Asadul Ghabah Vol.4 P.93.

All the problems that befell this great hero of Islam and the leader of the pious ones in terms of misfortunes and disasters etc., were for the sake of Allah (swt) and for the cause of Islam.

The great hero of Islam, Hamza, the Prophet's uncle, was martyred. When Hind knew about his fall, she was overjoyed and went out looking for his body. As soon as she set her eyes on it, she bent down on it like the bending of a dog (on its prey) and mutilated it viciously. She brought out Hamza's liver, put it in her mouth, chewed it, and then spat it out. She cut off his nose and his ears and made a necklace out of them. This showed the extent of her hatred and staunch enmity. It also exposed her wild, beastly, and wicked origin. As for Abu Sufyan (her husband), he rushed to the scene of the dead body of Hamza. He addressed the body with blasphemous words and hatred. He said, "O father of Ammara, time has changed and the matter is now resolved, but I feel sorry for you..." Then he took out his spear and stabbed the body of the martyred Hamza saying, "Taste this, taste this". Then he turned away in pleasure, his eyes glowing with happiness. Indeed his heart that was full of polytheism, evil and strong malice against Hamza, was now satisfied by his death.

As for the honourable Prophet (ṣ), he stood by the body of his uncle that had been mutilated by Hind. His soul melted with sorrow and grief. He said: "The like of you will never be afflicted with this for ever. I have never experienced any sight more unbearable than this. Not because *Safiyyatu* would grieve and that it would become a tradition after me. I would have left it (the mutilated body) alone for bellies of the wild animals and birds, so that if Allah (swt) would make us victorious over the Quraish in one of the battlefields, I would certainly mutilate thirty men of theirs in revenge." The Muslims then withdrew from the pure body murmuring, "By God, if Allah (swt) gives us the upper hand over them one day we would surely mutilate them with a kind of mutilation that not one of the Arab tribes had seen or done before. Then Jibrail (ʿa) descended upon the Holy Prophet (ṣ) with the following verse of the Holy Qur'ān: **"If you (desire to) punish (the oppressors) then punish (them) to the extent to which you have been wronged; but if you show patience, then surely that is best for those who are patient.**

And endure thy loss with patience; and verily, thy patience (is possible) only with (the help of) Allah. And grieve not for them, nor feel distressed because of their plots."

For this, the Prophet (ṣ) pardoned and endured with patience, and then afterwards he prohibited mutilation and declared, "Mutilation is forbidden even if it were to be carried out on an aggressive dog."

The battle of Uhud was the only battle in which the Muslims were defeated.

Ibn Ishaq says; "Verily the day of Uhud was one of misfortune, calamity and purification (of the souls of the believers). Allah (swt) used it to try the believers and to expose the hypocrites who pretended to have faith but concealed disbelief in their hearts; and it was the day Allah (swt) honoured those whom he intended to bestow honour upon by granting them martyrdom."[1]

At the end of this battle, the Prophet (ṣ) informed Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa) that the disbelievers would never inflict a similar defeat in any battle again, and that Allah (swt) would make the Muslims) victorious.

We have mentioned some of the events in connection with this war in the second volume of our book *Mausu'atu Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa)*.

3. The battle of Khandaq

The battle of Khandaq was called *Ahzab* because all the Arab tribes had gathered together to fight the Prophet (ṣ) in this war. The Muslims were overtaken by fear because of the power and the capabilities of the infidel forces. The Jews had also joined them. Their number was ten thousand. The Holy Qur'ān relates the story of how the Muslims were afflicted with great fear in this battle; Allah (swt) said **"When they came upon you from above you and from below you and when (your) hearts reached the throats and you thought (diverse) thoughts about Allah."**[2]

1- Siratu Nabawiyya: Vol.2 P.105.
2- Suratul *Ahzab*: 10.

Allah (swt) had indeed destined victory for Islam through the hands of the Leader of the pious ones, Imam ʻAli (ʻa). He was the one who scored victory over the disbelievers and uprooted their armies.

The digging of the "Khandaq" (Trench)

When the Prophet (ṣ) learnt that the Quraish army, a combination of different tribes and groups was coming to attack him, he gathered his companions to inform them and to see what their views were concerning the matter, particularly with suggestions of how to repel the enemy. Salman Farisi suggested the idea of digging a *Khandaq* (a big moat) round Medina. The Prophet (ṣ) agreed that the suggestion was right. Thus, he and his companions commenced the digging of the trench. It was a wise plan that saved the Muslims from the enemies' mischievous plots.

The Quraish became confused not knowing what to do for they could not cross or leap over it to reach the Muslims. Arrows were used and the Muslims repelled them with the same weapon.

Imam 'Ali's *(ʻa)* combat with Amr

At last the Quraish discovered a place where the Khandaq (trench) was somewhat narrower, so they managed to cross over. Among this group was Amr Ibn Abdu Wud the horseman of Quraysh in the era of ignorance and Kananeh tribe. He was fully armed. He was a fortress in himself and moved haughtily and arrogantly manifesting his great physical strength. When the Muslims saw him, they became speechless with fear. Amr raised his voice and said, "O companions of Muhammad! Is there any one who will fight me?" This sent terror into the hearts of the Muslims. He shouted for the second time, saying: "Listen! Is there any one who will fight me?" No one answered him, but the hero of Islam Imam ʻAli (ʻa) stood up to go to him saying, "I will fight him, O Messenger of Allah." The Prophet (ṣ) feared for his cousin and said, "He is Amr." Obeying the words of the Prophet, he sat down. Amr came again, this time mocking the Muslims: "O companions of Muhammad, where is your paradise that you claimed you would enter if you were killed? Is there no man among you who wants it? The Muslims were speechless. Then Imam ʻAli (ʻa) stood up and insisted on permission to fight him. The Prophet (ṣ) had no

alternative except to allow him. He (ṣ) put the most honourable badge on his neck and said, **"The whole of Faith is going to fight the whole of polytheism."**

He described Abul Hasan as *Faith*, the whole of it; and described Amr as disbelief, the whole of it. The Prophet (ṣ) then raised his hands and supplicated, saying: "O Allah, verily Thou took Hamza from me on the day of Uhud and Ubaida on the day of Badr, protect ʻAli for me today…O Lord do not leave me alone without descendants. You are the best of those who give inheritors."

Imam ʻAli (ʻa) then advanced proudly to fight Amr Ibn Abdu Wud. He (ʻa) moved towards him with firm determination and unique valour. Amr was taken aback at the young man who had advanced to fight him. Scornfully, he said to him, "Who are you?" Imam ʻAli (ʻa) answered: "I am ʻAli ibn Abi Talib." Amr pitied him and said to him: Your father was my friend," Imam ʻAli (ʻa) disregarded this friendship and accosted him, saying: "O Amr you vowed before your people that no man of Quraish would invite you to three things except that you would answer him."

He said, "Of course, that is my vow". Imam ʻAli (ʻa) then said, "First, I invite you to Islam." Amr laughed and said, "Should I leave the religion of my father? Leave this aside."

"Secondly, I will withhold my hand from killing you so that you can go back to your people unharmed." Amr became angry at the confidence and boldness of this young man, and said to him, "So that my fleeing would be the topic of discussion among Arab men?"

Imam ʻAli (ʻa) then forwarded the third option: "I invite you to fight." Amr was greatly surprised by this young man's courage to challenge him and looked down upon him, so he came down from his horse and struck Imam ʻAli's (ʻa) head with his sword. Imam ʻAli (ʻa) defended himself but the sword broke through Imam ʻAli's (ʻa) head splitting his skull. The Muslims were certain that the Imam had met his end, but Allah (swt) assisted him, defended and saved him. He struck Amr on his leg and cut it off which sent him crashing to the ground. The great hero of the Arabs and the symbol of polytheism had fallen to the ground and was lying in his own blood like a slaughtered bull. The

Imam shouted Allahu Akbar "Allah is great!" and the Muslims shouted, "Allah is great!"

The backbone of *Shirk* had been broken, its strength and might gone, while Islam had scored a decisive victory through the Leader of the pious ones.

The Prophet (ṣ) began to praise Imam ʻAli (ʻa) by saying, **"Indeed the fight of ʻAli ibn Abi Talib with Amr Ibn Abdu Wud on the day of Khandaq is better than all (the good) deeds of my Ummah (nation) until the day of resurrection."**[1]

The eminent companion Huzaifa Ibn Yamani said: "If ʻAli's merits for fighting Amr on the day of Khandaq were divided among all the Muslims it would suffice them."[2] Then the following holy verse was revealed in honour of ʻAli ibn Abi Talib: **"And Allah suffices the believers"**[3] in fighting.

Ibn Abbas in his interpretation of this verse said: "Allah (swt) sufficed the believers with the fighting of ʻAli (ʻa)."

Imam ʻAli (ʻa) then killed another commander of the Quraish, Nufal Ibn Abdullah, and with this the Quraish were totally shaken. The Prophet (ṣ) then declared; "Now we can continue to fight them and they will not be able to defeat us."[4]

The Quraish turned back on their heels shattered. They suffered the most disastrous defeat while no loss was inflicted upon the Muslims.

The victory of Khaybar

The Prophet (ṣ) saw that he would not be able to boost the affairs of the Muslim nor could they control anything in the real sense in the presence of the power and forces of the Jews, who were among the worst enemies of the Muslims. The Jews' strength lay strongly defended in the fortress of Khaybar, where they manufactured developed weapons of that time. For example, tanks that sent out

1- Tarikh Baghdad 13:19, Mustadraku Hakim: 3:32
2- Rasaail Jaahiz: 60.
3- Suratul *Ahzab*: 25.
4- Hayatu Amirul Mu'minin:2 P.27.

water after being ignited with fire were used. A new way of fighting Islam with new weapons was initiated by the Jews, besides the use of swords, spears and shields.

The Prophet (ṣ) advanced with his army towards the fortress of Khaybar in order to make them surrender. On the first day, he appointed Abubakr as the commander of his army. He marched to the fortress and on arriving there, he was received with a bombardment of bombs, so he returned defeated and was stricken with fear and horror. On the second day, the commandership of the army was handed to Umar Ibn Khatab. Like his friend he could not do anything, and the fortress remained closed and locked, intact and unharmed.

After the Muslim army had failed to open the fortress and their commanders were driven back, the Prophet (ṣ) announced that he was going to appoint a commander with whose hands Allah will open the fortress. He declared: "Tomorrow I will give the banner to a man who loves Allah and his Messenger and whom Allah and His Messenger love, he will not return except after Allah had blessed him with victory."[1]

The soldiers tried to guess who that inspired man could be. Who is the person whom Allah would give victory through his hands? In fact, no one guessed that it could be Imam ʻAli (ʻa) because he was afflicted with eye disease. When the light of dawn broke, the Prophet (ṣ) called for him with his eyes with a bandage. The Prophet (ṣ) removed the bandage from his eyes, he (ṣ) prayed and cured him immediately by rubbing saliva from his mouth into his eyes. Then he (ṣ) said to him: "Hold this banner until Allah opens (the door of Khaybar) for you."

A talented poet Al-Zari has described this event by saying:

The hero of Islam took hold of the banner from the Prophet (ṣ)

With a will and determination to defeat the opponents,

Then he said to the Prophet (ṣ), "Should I fight them until they become like us?"

1- Hiliyyatu Awliyau:1 P.62, Sifatu Safwa:1 P.163, Musnad Ahmad hadith no.778.

The Prophet (ṣ) replied, "Take it easy until you arrive in their courtyard;

Then invite them to Islam and inform them of that

Which is incumbent upon them with regard to Allah's right. By Allah, if He guides one man through you it is better

For you than to possess "Humru Niaam."[1]

The courageous commander hastened towards the fortress with pride without an atom of fear in his heart. On reaching there, he uprooted the door, raised it and started shielding himself with it from the shooting arrows and spears of the Jews. The Jews became terrified and frightened. "Who is that superman that has uprooted the door of the fortress and is shielding himself with it? How was it possible that one man had opened the gate that could only be opened by forty men, and lifted it up?!"

Imam 'Ali's *('a)* fight with Marhab

Marhab came out to fight Imam 'Ali ('a). He was a Jewish hero and the most courageous of them. He was wearing a helmet made in Yemen which a stone had perforated making a hole in it. He wore it on his head and reciting the following poem aloud:

Khaibar knows about me Marhab,

Fully armed with weapons, an experienced hero,

If lions confront him, they will burn.

The defender of Islam Imam 'Ali ('a) who was wearing a red *Jubba* (long outer garment open in front) replied by reciting the following lines:

I am one whose mother named him "Haider"

Very strong, like a lion of the forest

The narrators of Hadiths unanimously agree on the fact that this poem was about Imam 'Ali ('a).[1]

1- Sifatu Safwa Vol.1 P.164, Sahih Bukhari Vol.7 P.121.

The war strategy, courage, heroism, firmness and unshakable stance against the infidels and apostates of the Commander of the faithful (ʿa) was indeed demonstrated in this duel.

Imam ʿAli (ʿa) moved towards Marhab and struck him a deadly blow which cut through his helmet right into his head dividing it into half. He fell down soaked in his blood. Imam ʿAli (ʿa) then finished with him and left him dead, leaving the corpse there as food for wild animals and birds. With this, Allah (swt) set a decisive victory for Islam. The fortress of Khaiybar lay open, and Allah (swt) humiliated the Jews while Imam ʿAli (ʿa) taught them a bitter lesson that would be remembered down the ages.

The conquest of Mecca

Allah (swt) ordained a clear victory for His servant the Apostle of Allah (ṣ) and humiliated the forces of polytheism and transgression. The Islamic state spread over many Arabian states of the peninsula, and the standard of Islam was raised in all these areas.

The Prophet (ṣ) realized that he could not achieve real victory without conquering Mecca, the stronghold of polytheism and infidelity. The Prophet (ṣ) advanced towards it with an army of ten thousand armed soldiers.

He advanced towards Mecca in secret, fearing that if the Quraish knew about it, they would prepare to confront them, which could result in great shedding of blood in the Holy city. So he waited until he was militarily strong enough.

The Muslim army set out and reached the outskirts of the Holy City of Mecca while its people were unaware.

The Prophet (ṣ) ordered his army to gather firewood. When night came he ignited all the firewood. Its flames could be seen from Mecca. Abu Sufyan was filled with terror, so he said to Badil Ibn Ruqa'a who was beside him, "What do I see? It seems the night is full of burning fire." Badil quickly replied: "By God, this is a small piece of fire inflamed and magnified by war." Abu Sufyan mocked him and

1- Khazanatul Adab Vol.6 P.56.

said: "A piece of fire cannot seem this huge nor expand the army to such a great number of soldiers.

Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib, who was already aware of the advancement of the soldiers and the occupation of Mecca, quickly went to him in the darkness of the night, pretending to be anxious like him, and said: "O Aba Hanzala!" Abu Sufyan recognized him immediately and asked, "Is that Abul Fadl?" He said, "Yes." Then Abu Sufyan said, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you."

Abbas said, "Woe to you Abu Sufyan! This is the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). He will be in the midst of the Quraish people at dawn!"

Abu Sufyan's blood froze for he feared for himself and his people. Then he said with a disturbed and worried voice, "What is the solution to this problem? May my father and mother be sacrificed for your sake?" Abbas began to show him the way to save his blood by saying to him, "By God, if the Messenger of Allah defeats you he will break your neck, therefore, I advise you to ride on this horse so that it can take you to the Prophet (ṣ) and you can seek protection from him." Then he followed him from behind while he i.e. Abu Sufyan was greatly filled with fear and sorrow. He remained awake throughout the night pondering on the situation, for he did not know what his fate would be. This was because he had committed many atrocities and crimes against Islam. When he appeared before the Prophet (ṣ) the Prophet (ṣ) said to him: "Woe to you Abu Sufyan! Is it not time for you to know that there is no God except Allah?"

The Prophet (ṣ) did not dwell on the enmity he had shown towards him but let the Islamic spirit of not taking revenge prevail. Abu Sufyan began to show meekness before the Prophet (ṣ), seeking his pardon by saying, "May my father and mother be your sacrifice. Oh, how tolerant, how honourable and kind you are. By God I (have come to believe) that if there were another God besides Allah he would have come to my rescue and sufficed me".

The Prophet (ṣ) looked at him and remarked "Woe to you Abu Sufyan! Is it not time for you to realize that I am the Messenger of Allah? Here Abu Sufyan could not conceal what he hid in his mind of polytheism and disbelief, so he said to him, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, but as for this, at present I still have

some doubts in my mind." Abbas came forward to him and warned him of the danger he would face if he did not testify to the Prophethood of the Prophet (ṣ) and profess Islam. He warned him saying: "Woe to you! Embrace Islam and bear witness that there is no God save Allah and that verily Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah before your neck is cut off. The evil and indecent man saw that there was no way out for him, so he professed Islam with his mouth while his heart harboured disbelief and hypocrisy towards Islam. The Prophet (ṣ) instructed his uncle Abbas to detain Abu Sufyan in the entrance of the narrow valley so that he could witness the march-past of the Islamic forces and arouse awe in his heart, and discourage him from any possible confrontation. Abbas took him to the narrow passage.

The army marched past fully armed and dressed in battle dress. As the battalions passed one after the other, Abu Sufyan asked Abbas questions concerning every one of them. He asked him, "Who is this?" He replied, "This is Salim (and his battalion)". He said "Good God, I am nothing compared to Salim." Then another battalion passed and he repeated his question. "This is Mazinat", said Abbas. He repeated his comment as before. Then the Prophet (ṣ) and his green battalion passed through with their swords drawn and his eminent companions surrounding him. Abu Sufyan had no option except to hail it when he said, "Whose battalion is this! The reply came: "This is the Messenger of Allah among the Muhajirins and the Ansars." Then he said, "Indeed your nephew's kingship has become very great." Abbas replied: O Abu Sufyan, it is Prophethood (not kingship)." Then Abu Sufyan shook his rotten head and said scornfully, "Of course, and so what?"

This ignorant person could never believe in Islam, for the only thing he understood was leadership and authority. After saying this, Abbas released him and he immediately left for Mecca announcing, "O people of Quraish! This is Muhammad (ṣ); he has come to you with what you cannot confront. Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyan is safe and secure."

The Quraish lashed out saying: "Of what use is your house to us." He continued saying: "Whoever locks himself indoors is safe, and whoever enters the mosque is safe."

Thus, the fear of the Quraish people subsided somewhat and they hurried towards their houses and to the mosque. Hind stood up vehemently opposing the stance of Abu Sufyan for her heart was filled with grief. She shouted, inciting her people to rise up against Abu Sufyan. She screamed, "Kill this dirty evil man. What a bad leader of the people he is!" However, Abu Sufyan went on warning the Quraish that disobedience could lead to rebellion, so they should surrender.

The Prophet (ṣ) entered Mecca with the Muslim army which Allah (swt) had used to humiliate the Quraish and raise the weak ones among the Muslims. The Prophet (ṣ) headed straight for the Ka'aba and hastened to destroy the idols that the Quraish worshipped in place of Allah (swt). Then the Prophet (ṣ) began to strike the eyes of Hubal (the name of the chief idol) with his bow while he recited the following verse: *"Truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Verily, falsehood is bound to vanish."*

Then the Prophet (ṣ) ordered 'Ali ('a) to climb upon his shoulders and destroy the idols from the top of the Ka'aba, so as to purify the House (of Allah) from them. 'Ali ('a) began to throw them down to the ground until he finished with them all. The destruction of the great idols of Ka'aba was done by the hero of Islam as done by his grandfather Ibrahim ('a) Khalil-Allah (the friend of Allah.

The farewell pilgrimage

The Prophet (ṣ) was certain that he would soon pass away from this world into the presence of Almighty Allah, so, he thought it necessary to perform the last pilgrimage to the house of Allah and lay down a future plan for his nation. He traveled in the 10th year after Hijra to the House of Allah. He announced his close departure from this world to the next world saying, "Verily, I may never meet you again after this year of mine in this very place…"

The pilgrims became worried and scared and overwhelmed with grief. They asked sorrowfully: "Does the Prophet (ṣ) mean himself?" Then the Prophet (ṣ) laid out the good plans that would save them from calamities and secure a prosperous life thus, saying "O you people, I am leaving behind two weighty things, the Book of Allah and the progeny of my household …Hold fast to the book of Allah (swt) and

work with what is in it. Recognizing the leadership of the household of the Prophet is a guarantee for the nation from deviation and falling into misdeeds of this world…" Then the Prophet (ṣ) addressed the people after the end of the Hajj ceremonies with an explicit and moving sermon in which he announced a number of important Islamic teachings and laws. He concluded his speech by saying: "Do not go back to disbelief after me; you will go astray while some of you will enslave others. Verily I am leaving behind me the Book of Allah and my offspring from my household. If you hold fast to both you will never go astray. Lo! Have I delivered (my message)?" They all shouted together at once, saying, "Yes!"

He (ṣ) then said: "O Allah bear witness… Verily you will be held responsible, so those who are present should inform those who are absent…"[1]

We have mentioned the details of this sermon in the second part of the *Encyclopedia of Imam 'Amirul Mu'minin ('a)*.

The occasion of Ghadir Khum

The Prophet (ṣ) was returning back to Medina with some Hajj caravans, when he was stopped by Angel Gabriel ('a) with a message of great importance from God (swt), when he reached a place called Ghadir Khum. This verse was revealed to him: **"O Messenger convey to (the people) what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord and if thou do it not, thou hast not conveyed His Message at all, and Allah will protect thee from men."**[2]

The Prophet (ṣ) received this message with great concern, so he immediately decided to convey it. He discontinued his journey and commanded the caravans to stop in order to listen to the sermon which he was about to deliver to them. After performing the noon prayers he (ṣ) ordered them to make a pulpit of camel saddles. They promptly obeyed. He climbed it and delivered a moving speech in which he recounted the great and difficult struggle he had carried out for the sake of Islam; what the situation of the people was in terms of

1- Hayatu Imam Husain (as) 1:195, quoted from Tarikhul Ya'qubi 2:90.
2- Suratu *Maidah*: 67.

ignorance and how he had come to save them, and established a civilized and developed system for them. He then said, "Beware of how you deal with the two weighty things after me."

Somebody asked from among the people: "O Messenger of God! What are the two weighty things?"

He replied: "One of them is the greater one and that is the Book of Allah; one edge of it is in the hand of Allah and the other edge is in your hands, so hold fast to it, you will never go astray. The other one is my offspring, and the Most Subtle and All Knowing Allah has informed me that the two will never part until they both return to me at the pool of Kauthar. Then I asked my Lord for this: Do not go before them (in any matter) or else you will be ruined; do not lag behind them else you will be ruined..."

Then the Prophet (ṣ) took hold of the hand of his Wasiy (Trustee), the gate of the city of knowledge, Imam ʻAli (ʻa) and said "O people, who among people are nearer to the believers than their own selves?" They all answered: "God and his Messenger know better." The Prophet (ṣ) declared, "Verily God is my Master, and I am the master of the believers, and I am nearer to the believers than their own selves, so ʻAli is his master whose master I am." He repeated this statement three times, and added in honour of Imam ʻAli (ʻa): "O Allah, befriend him who befriends him, be enemy to him who shows enmity to him, love him who loves him, hate him who hates him, help him who helps him, disgrace him who disgraces him, and make the truth follow him wherever he goes. Lo! Those present should inform those who are absent…"

With this, he ended his noble speech in which he appointed Imam ʻAli (ʻa) to the highest authority that his nation could return to, as the leader who would take care of the affairs and be the final authority for the Muslims after him.

Thereafter, the Muslims came forward to pay their oath of allegiance to Imam ʻAli (ʻa) and congratulate him for being appointed the leader of the Muslims. Then the Prophet (ṣ) commanded the mothers of the

faithful (His wives) to pay allegiance to him.[1] Then Umar Ibn Khatab went forward and shook hands with him (ʿa). He congratulated him and said: "Congratulations, O son of Abi Talib, you have become my leader and the leader of every believing man and believing woman."[2]

Hasan Ibn Thabit came forward and recited the following poem:

On the day of Ghadir the Prophet (s) summoned them

All at Khum

And asked, "Who is your Lord and who is your Mawla (master)?"

They answered willingly: "Allah is our Lord and you are our Mawla

You will never find us disobedient."

He said, "Stand up 'Ali, I am relieved

You will be Imam and guide after me

Remember, 'Ali is master of whom I am master

So, be faithful followers and helpers to him."

Then he prayed," O God, befriend his friends

Be hostile to whoever opposes 'Ali."

The oath of allegiance was given to Imam 'Ali (ʿa) at Ghadir Khum in response to the Divine command. Whoever denies it denies Islam. This is what is written by Allama Al-'Alaaili.

The everlasting misfortune

After the Prophet (s) had delivered his Lord's message and appointed Imam 'Ali (ʿa) as the leader of his nation and the highest authority to be referred to, his health began to deteriorate. He was afflicted with a serious fever. Even though he was wearing velvet, his wives felt the intense heat.[3] The Muslims rushed in to visit him. He informed the

1- Al- Ghadir 2:34.
2- Musnad Ahmad 4:281.
3- Bidayyatu wa Nihayya 5: 226.

people that his demise was close so he announced his Will to them, saying, "O people, I am about to be taken away very soon. Lo! I am leaving behind among you the Book of Allah (swt) and the progeny of my Household …."

As his death was drawing closer, it became clear to him that there were among his companions some groups and elements that were making efforts to deprive his household of the successorship after him. He saw that the best thing to do was to keep them away from Medina and send them to participate in the battle of Rome. He prepared a military detachment and made the young Usama Ibn Zaid the overall commander. He did not entrust it to any of the older companions but made them ordinary soldiers under his command. They showed reluctance to join him, so the Prophet (ṣ) went up the pulpit and addressed them saying: "Execute my order by joining Usama's army, may the curse of Allah be upon whoever stays behind Usama's army..."

This serious order did not have any effect on them. There are some important studies made concerning this issue presented in our book named *Hayatu Imam Hasan ('a)*.

The Thursday calamity

The Prophet (ṣ) saw that it was necessary to maintain the allegiance paid to his successor of the day of Ghadir in order to block the rebellious elements. He said, **"Give me *Katif* (a piece of paper) and ink so that I should write down for you that which would prevent you from going astray…"**

What a great favour it would have been for the Muslims! It was surely a guarantee granted by the leader of all creatures that would protect his nation from going astray after him. It would have been a programme based on one entity devoid of emotional tendencies…What sort of writing was that which could grant guidance and positive transformation to the Islamic nation?!

Some of the companions knew the intention of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). They knew that he wanted to write a Will in which he would appoint Imam 'Ali ('a) as the caliphate after him, so they expressed their rejection by saying, "The book of Allah (swt) suffices us."

A look at this statement would reveal the aim of the speaker. They had reached a conclusion and certainty that with this writing the Prophet (ṣ) would appoint ʻAli (ʻa) as the leader after him. If they had thought or considered that it was important that the Prophet (ṣ) should write something which would safeguard and protect the interest of the religion, they would not have confronted him the way they did.

However, there were too many arguments among those present beside the sick bed of the Prophet (ṣ); a group trying to carry out the order of the Prophet (ṣ) while another group insisting and preventing the Prophet (ṣ) from writing. Some wives of the Prophet and some companions, seeing that their action was rude and an attempt to disobey the order of the Prophet (ṣ) said, "Why do you not listen to what the Prophet (ṣ) is saying? Why do you not execute the order of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ)?"

Then Umar, the leader of the opposing group, rose and shouted at the women saying, "You are just like the women of Yusuf, now that he is sick you weep and grieve over him but when he is healthy you cause him inconvenience."

The Prophet (ṣ) stared at him and said, "Leave them alone for they are better than you people..." Therein, those present there began to quarrel. It was a battlefield because those who wanted the Prophet (ṣ) to write were about to win when somebody among the opposing group came forward and shot an arrow at the Prophet's statement saying: "The Prophet is talking nonsense…"[1]

How could a person dare utter such blasphemy before the Prophet (ṣ)? How serious was that transgression upon the core of Prophethood? How could that Prophet (ṣ) speak nonsense about whom Allah (swt) says, **"Your companion has neither gone astray nor has erred, nor does he speak out of (his own)**

1- Quotations about these events are narrated by all the narrators of Hadith. Bukhari mentioned this in his Sahih several times in Vol.4 P.68 and 69, also in "Juz'i" (part) 6:8, but he hid the name of the person who said that, but in Sharhi ibn Athir and Sharhi Nahjul Balaga by ibn Abi Hadid Vol.3 P.113 and some other persons, they have clearly mentioned the name of the person who said that.

desire; it is only a Revelation revealed. He has been taught (the Qur'an) by One mighty in power."[1]

How could he (ṣ) speak nonsense while Allah (swt) is saying concerning him, **"This is surely the revealed word of a noble Messenger, Possessor of power, honoured in the presence of the Lord of the Throne."**[2]

It is necessary for us to examine these incidents carefully without prejudice because the above matter is directly connected to the essence of our religion. This episode reveals what happened then and what treacherous plots were planned against Islam?

In any case, whenever Ibn Abbas mentioned this unfortunate incident he would be seized with grief and sorrow and weep and always remark: "Thursday! Oh what (a terrible) Thursday it was! The Prophet (ṣ) said: 'Give me *Katif* and ink so that I may write something so that you do not go astray after me,' but unfortunately, they said: 'Surely the Prophet is speaking nonsense …'."

It is most likely that if the Prophet (ṣ) had written down anything in honour of Imam 'Ali ('a) it wouldn't have any impact on those people, for they had already accused him (ṣ) of speaking nonsense and not being in his senses. Saying such a thing concerning the Prophet (ṣ) is a clear rejection of prophetic sanctity and sacredness.

To the highest part of Firdaus (Paradise)

The time came for the heavenly light that used to illuminate the world to depart. The angel of death had drawn close to him (ṣ) to take that great Spirit. The holy Prophet (ṣ) looked at 'Ali ('a) and said to him, "Put my head on your lap for Allah's commandment has already come. When I die, attend to my body, rub your face on it, then place me in the direction of the Qibla; take charge of my affairs and personally conduct my funeral prayers; do not part from me until you have buried me in my grave; always seek the help of Allah (swt)."

1- Suratu Najm: 2 to 5.
2- Suratu Takwir: 19 - 20.

Then Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) took hold of the Prophet’s (ṣ) head, placed it on his lap, and passed his right hand under his neck. It was not long before the Prophet’s (ṣ) great soul passed away; the Imam (ʿa) then rubbed his face over the pure body.[1]

The Muslims’ dream ended, prominent women from all corners of Medina rushed in beating and slapping their faces in grief.

The sound of weeping and crying rose high but as for the mothers of the believers, they drew their veils over their heads and beat their chests, while the throats of the Ansari women grew hoarse due to excessive wailing.

The most grieved and most afflicted by the tragedy of the Ahlul-Bayt of the Prophet (ṣ) was Fatima Zahra (ʿa),who had thrown herself on the holy body and was chanting loudly, “Wa Abata” “O my father!”

“O the Prophet of mercy.”

“Now the revelation has ceased.”

“Now Angel Gabriel has stopped coming to us.”

“O Allah! Join my soul with his soul and grant me intercession by my looking at his face; and do not deprive me of its reward and his intercession on the day of resurrection.”[2]

Then she started moving round the holy body repeating:

“O my father! Gabriel is the one who announced your death.”

“O my father! The paradise of Firdaus is your returning place.”

“O my father! You answered the call of your Lord when He called you.”[3]

Then she became silent and faint, Oh what a great calamity had befallen *Zahra and Raihanatu* of the Prophet!

1- Al-Munaqib: 1151 and numerous narrations confirm that the Prophet (saw) died while his head was resting on ‘Ali’s lap.
2- Tarikhu Khamis 2:192.
3- Siyar A’laamu An-Nablaau 2:88. Sunanu Ibn Maaja 2:287–288, in it, from Hammad bn Zaid who said: I saw the narrator of the tradition weeping so much that his ribs trembled whenever he narrated it.

Preparing the sacred body

Imam ʻAli (ʿa) prepared the Prophet's (ṣ) body. He washed the pious body repeating the following sorrowful lines: "May my father and mother be sacrificed, O Messenger of Allah. Verily your demise has seized what had never been seized with the death of other prophets: divine messages and heavenly news…"

Imam ʻAli (ʿa) washed the body, then wrapped it in a shroud and placed it on a bed.

Funeral prayer upon the holy body

The first to pray for the holy body was Allah (swt) on the throne, then Jibrail, Israfil (ʿa) and the remaining angels, group by group.[1] The Muslims rushed in to offer their prayers for the holy body of their Prophet (ṣ). Imam ʻAli (ʿa) said to them, "In your prayer for him no one should lead or be Imam before him (ṣ), for he is your Imam, living or dead." Delegates after delegates were entering and offering their prayers in rows without Imams. Their prayers for the body was a special one, Imam ʻAli (ʿa) was reciting the supplication and they were repeating it after him. Here is the text of the prayer:

"Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and may His mercy and blessing be upon thee. O Allah! We bear witness that he indeed delivered what was revealed to him, admonished his Ummah, and fought in the cause of Allah until Allah made his religion great and perfected His words. O Allah, make us be among those who follow what was revealed to him, and make us firm and steadfast after him, and join us with him." Those offering the prayer said, "Amen".[2]

The burial ceremony of the holy body

After the Muslims finished performing their prayers for the holy body of their Prophet (ṣ), Imam ʻAli (ʿa) dug the grave and buried the body of his brother in it. He felt drained of all energy. He stood at the edge of the grave and tearfully recited the following:

1- Hiliyyatu Awliyau 3:77.
2- Kanzul Ummal 4:54.

"Verily patience is beautiful except in the case of losing (somebody like) you. Impatience or anguish is bad except when it is for (losing) you. Indeed the calamity of losing you is great and indescribable. Indeed no misfortune is equal to it, neither before you nor after you."

Indeed that day will forever remain a day in which the banner of justice and pillar of truth were folded up. The day the great light that was illuminating the whole universe disappeared. Then human life changed into real darkness that had no glitter of light. The life of security which had flourished with civilization and justice in his presence disappeared. Indeed it was a life in which the cries of the oppressed and wailing of the deprived were heard. At that time, Allah's bounties were distributed equally among His servants in such a way that no one could hoard or monopolize.

The meeting at Saqifa

There is no disaster in the Islamic world in which the Muslims were subjected to the most serious and worst trial like that of the event of Saqifa in which the fire of controversies among the Muslims was ignited and the windows of destruction and ruin were opened.

The *Ansars* (the helpers i.e. the Medinites) had summoned a meeting in a roofed-gallery called Saqifa of *Bani Sa'ida*, the very day of demise of the Holy Messenger of God (ṣ). The meeting comprised two groups, one from the tribe of *Aus* and the other from *Khazraj*. The theme of the meeting was the issue of caliphate i.e. the successor ship of the Prophet (ṣ), to prevent it from falling into the hands of the *Muhajirin* (the immigrants i.e. the Meccans) who had already made it known and shown their complete rejection of the oath of allegiance paid to Imam ʻAli (ʻa) at Ghadir Khum on his appointment as the successor and leader after the Prophet (ṣ). They considered it unacceptable that Prophethood and Caliphate-ship should be from one family or one house. Just as one of the prominent figures among them had obstructed the Prophet (ṣ) from what he wanted to write in favour of Imam ʻAli (ʻa) saying that he was talking nonsense, therefore, they did not execute his order.

On the other hand, the *Ansars* formed the backbone of the Prophet's (ṣ) armed forces. The Quraish nursed strong animosity and hatred towards the *Ansars* for this reason. The *Ansars* hastened to

hold this meeting for fear of what the *Muhajirin* might do concerning this matter of caliphate.

Habbab Ibn Munzir said, "We were afraid that those whom we had killed, their sons, fathers and brothers would take charge of the affairs."[1]

Thus, some parties among the *Ansar* had elected Sa'ad for the post of caliph. However, Khudair Ibn Usaid, chief of the *Aws* clan opposed and condemned the oath of allegiance to Sa'ad because of the long-time hatred between his tribe and the tribe of *Khazraj*. Then 'Awim Ibn Sadat and Maan Ibn Adi an ally of the *Ansar* hurried to Abubakr and Umar and informed them of what was going on at *Saqifa*. Abubakr and Umar were startled, so they quickly went to the *Saqifa*. The *Ansar* were taken by surprise; things that were in their hands fell down while Sa'ad's colour turned pale. After a heated argument between Abubakr and the *Ansar*, Abubakar's party stood up and paid allegiance to him. Umar played his role as expected of him on the field very well, for he led people to pay allegiance to his friend. Thereafter, Abubakr came out of *Saqifa* in the midst of his party members who surrounded him from all sides. He headed towards the Prophet's Mosque chanting "*Allahu Akbar*" and "*La Ilaha Illa Allah*". It is important to note that the opinion of the Prophet's (s) family and some of the prominent companions of the Prophet (ṣ) like Ammar Ibn Yasir, Abu Zarr, Miqdad and others were neglected in the so-called oath of allegiance and the election of Abubakr.

The stand of Imam 'Ali *('a)* concerning the oath of allegiance paid to Abubakr

Historians and narrators of the prophetic traditions have unanimously agreed that Imam 'Ali's ('a) reaction to the oath of allegiance paid to Abubakr was characterized by revulsion and (total) displeasure, for he was the most qualified person for it, and the closest person to the Prophet (ṣ). He was to the Prophet (ṣ) what Hārūn was to Musa ('a). Islam had been established through his efforts and holy wars, and he was the one tried with a goodly trial in

1- Hayatu Imam Husain (as) 1:235.

Islam. The Prophet (ṣ) said to the Muslims: "Whose master I am, ʻAli is his master." This was why he refrained from giving allegiance (to Abubakr).

Abubakr and Umar made an agreement to force him to pay the oath of allegiance. Umar Ibn Khattab went with his followers and surrounded his house. Umar was grumbling and threatening to deal ruthlessly with anyone who would oppose him. In his hand was a brand of fire with which he intended to burn the house of revelation i.e. the house of the person who was part of the Prophet (ṣ), the leader of the women of the whole world, Fatimatu-Zahra (ʿa). For this reason she came out to confront him. She called out to him saying: "What have you brought with you, O son of Khattab?" He replied harshly, saying, "What I have brought is stronger than what your father brought."[1]

It is indeed very unfortunate and sorrowful to see that some people decided to take such a harsh attitude towards the Prophet's (beloved) daughter, Az-Zahra (ʿa).

Concerning this unfortunate incident, there is nothing we can say except, "We are from Allah and to Him is our return."

In any case, they forcefully took Imam ʻAli (ʿa) out of his house with his hands tied up and brought him to Abubakr and shouted at him: 'Pay the oath of allegiance to Abubakr, pay the oath of allegiance to Abubakr!'

Imam ʻAli (ʿa) was not moved by their might and haughtiness, and calmly answered them, saying, "I am more entitled to this position than you people. I cannot pay allegiance to you when it is you who should pay allegiance to me. You people usurped this caliphate from the *Ansars* with the claim that you are nearer (in kinship) to the Prophet (ṣ) and now you are usurping it from the very household of

1- Ansabu Ashraf Lil Blaaziri, Historians are unanimous about Umar's threat to Imam ʻAli (as) that he would set his house on fire. References can be made to the following books: Tarikhu Tabari 3:202. Tarikh Abul Fidaa'i 1:156, Tarikh Ya'qubi 2:105, Muruju Zahb 1:414, Al-Imamatu wa siyasa 1:12, Sharh Nahjul Balaga of Ibn Abi Hadid 1:34, Al-Amwal by Abi Ubaida:131, A'alamun Nisaau 3:205, Al-Imam ʻAli by Ubbad Al-Fattah Maqsud 2:213.

the Prophet (ṣ). Were you not the very persons who claimed that you were more entitled to this affair than they because of your position to the Prophet (ṣ), and they gave you the leadership and surrendered the authority to you? Now I am offering you the same proof you used against the *Ansars*. We are nearer to the Prophet (ṣ) both when he was alive and after his demise, so be fair to us if you believe (in Allah) and if not, then take allegiance by oppression while you are aware of what you are doing."

What a clear and simple testimony. The *Muhajirun* from the Quraish were able to win the *Ansar* with this evidence, that they were nearer to the Prophet (ṣ). The fact is that the Quraish included the tribe of the Prophet (ṣ), but concerning the degree of closeness they were not close to the Prophet (ṣ) like the sons of his uncles. Indeed there were numerous and clear ways in which Imam ʻAli (ʻa) was nearer to the Prophet (ṣ) than others for he was the son of his paternal uncle, the father of his (ṣ) two grand sons (Hasan and Husain), his son-in-law through his daughter, the only one from whom came all the descendants of the Prophet (ṣ).

But Umar went on insisting and said bluntly to Imam ʻAli (ʻa): "You must pay allegiance." ʻAli said, "And if I don't?" He (Umar) said: "By Allah, we will cut off your head." Imamʻ Ali (ʻa) looked at the people. He could see that whims and caprices had overwhelmed them and led them astray; they were blinded by their love of kingship and authority. He could not see among them any one who could support him, or defend him from their evil, so then he said softly and sorrowfully, "So you will kill a servant of Allah and the Prophet's (s) brother?" Ibn Khattab as usual, fired back at him saying, "As for your being a servant of God, Yes, but as for your being the brother of the Prophet, No!"

Umar seemed to forget that the Prophet had widely publicized ʻAli (ʻa) as his brother and the gate of knowledge and that he (ʻAli (ʻa) was to him what Hārūn was to Musa (ʻa) and that he was the first warrior of Islam. All these he forgot and denied. He then turned to Abubakr and urged him to take action so that he could be punished, saying: "Won't you give your command concerning him?"

Abubakr feared tribulation and the consequent result that might follow their action so he said, "I will not force him as long as Fatima (ʻa) is by

his side." Therefore they released him after some time. Imam ʻAli (ʻa) hurried quickly towards the resting place (grave) of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) to complain to him concerning the trials and the misfortunes that had afflicted him (since his demise). He wept bitterly as he addressed the Prophet (ṣ), reciting the Qur'ānic verse: **"O son of my mother, the people indeed deemed me weak and were about to kill me ….."**[1]

Indeed, the people deemed him weak and rejected the Prophet's (s) Will concerning him.

Imam ʻAli (ʻa) then returned home depressed and worried. Then he remembered that Allah (swt) had already informed them concerning the incident that would occur after the Ummah lost the Prophet; that there would be a turning back (of some people), and that became very clear. Allah Almighty said, **"And Muhammad is only a Messenger. Verily all Messengers have passed away before him. If then he dies or is slain will you turn back on your heels? And he who turns back on his heels shall not harm Allah at all. And Allah will certainly reward the grateful."**[2]

Indeed this great turning back destroyed the foundations of faith and the dreams of the people. Therefore, we say: 'We are from Allah and to Him is our return.'

To conclude this unfortunate incident and the harsh behaviour of Abubakr towards the progeny of the Prophet's household (ʻa), it is necessary to mention their confiscation of Fadaq, and the abandoning of Khums (one-fifth) of the Muslims' wealth that used to be paid to the Ahlul-Bayt (ʻa) besides a series of unjust acts. We have mentioned them in detail in the book called *'Mausu'atu Imam Amirul Mu'minin (ʻa)'*.

Zahra *(ʻa)* in eternal security

The worst tragedy Imam ʻAli (ʻa) suffered was the loss of Zahra, his wife and (daughter) of the Prophet (ṣ). Illness had struck her because

1- Al-Imam wa Siyasa P.27 to 31.
2- Suratul *Al-Imran*:144.

of the misfortunes that her heart had suffered; pain overwhelmed her and death drew close while still young. Oh, how quickly the world lost part of the Messenger of Allah and his fragrance! Within a short time after the death of the Prophet (ṣ), she had suffered the worst kinds of trials. She had to argue with some people concerning her position and relationship to her father. In addition, they confiscated her heritage, they attacked her house. She entrusted her will to ʻAli ibn Abi Talib, her husband. She made a very strong Will of utmost importance. She insisted that no one among those who had usurped her rights should be allowed to attend her funeral ceremony. She also directed in her will that she should be buried at night when it was quiet and dark, that her grave should be leveled, (so that it could not be recognized). She wished to inform the coming generations of the grave injustice, the great pain and wrath that some people had inflicted upon her.

Imam ʻAli (ʿa) performed her funeral rites according to her will. Then he stood at the edge of her grave with tears flowing down his face. He offered the salutation of peace to the Prophet (ṣ), expressed his condolences to him, and complained to him by saying: "*Peace and blessings be upon you from me O Messenger of Allah and from your daughter, who has now arrived by your side, rejoining you in haste. O Messenger of Allah, my patience has diminished greatly in bearing your loss….***We are from Allah and to Him is our return.**"

After that reign of power passed, he encountered many crises one after the other. Those in power isolated him, therefore, he decided to boycott them and distance himself from them. Thus, he turned away from them and they also turned away from him. He decided to distance himself from all political matters and not participate in the policies of the ruling regime.

Umar's government

The government of Abubakr lasted for just over two years overcome by ailments and defects. When he was about to die, he entrusted the mantle of (leadership) *Caliphate* to his friend Umar. This met with sharp and serious criticism and opposition from some eminent

companions, but he ignored it and insisted on his opinion.[1] He wrote an official letter of appointment for Umar. Usman Ibn Affan was his scribe. Then he (Usman) showed it to the people and distributed its copies among them calling them to come out and take the oath of allegiance (to Umar).

Umar took on the reigns of caliphate easily and did not face any serious confrontational forces or any difficulty. He ruled with an iron hand with such sternness and highhandedness that many of the prominent companions of the Prophet (ṣ) disliked even having anything to do with him. According to historical accounts, his reign was more frightening and sharper than a very sharp sword. He, indeed, transgressed all bounds by using force most harshly while exercising authority over the states that were under him. He adopted methods of administration which were peculiar to him (i.e. no one adopted such policies either before or after him).

We have mentioned his internal, external, and economical politics in detail in the second part of *Mausu'atu Imam Amirul Mu'minin ('a)*.

The assassination of Umar

Umar followed a special policy towards the Persian people that showed that he hated them and they too hated him. Abu Lu'lu' was a Persian who used to dislike Umar very much, so he plotted evil against him. One day while he happened to pass by him Umar said mockingly, "I have heard that you say: 'If I wish to make a grinding stone capable of grinding the air I could do it'." Abu Lu'lu was greatly upset by this joke and retorted angrily: 'Really, I will certainly make for you a grinding stone that will be the talk of the town.'

The following day, Abu Lu'lu' carried out the assassination operation[2] by stabbing him three times making sure that each and every cut went through his navel perforating his inner skin. Then Abu Lu'lu attacked those who were present in the Mosque and stabbed some men, after which he stabbed himself to death. Umar was carried to his house with blood profusely flowing from his wounds. His

1- Sharh Nahjul Balagha Ibn Abi Hadid 9:343.
2- Murujul Zahb Vol.2 P.212.

family brought a physician to treat him. The doctor asked him, "Which drink do you like best? He said *Nabiz* (i.e. wine made out of grapes). They gave it to him but it flowed out through his wounds. The people exclaimed, "It came out as pus!" They gave him milk but it also came out. Then the doctor lost hope and declared, "I don't think you will survive to see the evening."

The consultative committee

Umar became seriously ill, so he began to think deeply as to whom he should hand over the nation's leadership. He remembered some of those friends who had aided him in removing the leadership from the Prophet's (ṣ) family. He expressed his remorse, saying, "If Abu Ubaida were alive I would certainly make him my successor for he was a trusted person of this Ummah, and if Salim the slave of Abu Huzaifa was alive I would certainly make him my successor because his love for Allah (swt) was very strong"

Ironically, when we go through the pages of Islamic history we find out the Abu Ubaida had never played any role in the fields of any Jihad nor rendered any service to the Islamic movement. As for Salim the slave of Abu Huzaifa, he was a great enemy of the Ahlul bayt (ʿa). He played a vital role in attacking the house of Imam ʿAli (ʿa) and…. Verily, it is obligatory for us to study those events with an open mind free of sectarian controversies or bias, so that the Muslims can be well informed of them.

Umar then introduced a shabby system and formed a frivolous (consultative committee) *Nizam Shura*. Its sole aim was to isolate Imam ʿAli (ʿa) from the caliphate and hand it over to Usman Ibn Affan, a pillar of the Umayyad family, so as to please the Quraish who were filled with grudge, malice and hatred for Imam Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa).

Usman Ibn Affan took up the leadership of the Islamic *Ummah* in accordance with the terms of the consultative committee that threw the Muslims into an everlasting trial, subjecting them to the worst evil.

We have discussed this consultative committee in detail and all the criticism related to it in our book *Mausu'atu Imam Amirul Mu'minin (a.s).*

The government of Usman Ibn Affan

A large majority of the Muslim *Ummah* received the caliphate of Usman with a lot of grudges, despondency and worries. They regarded it as a victory for the family and relatives who had never left any stone unturned in fighting against Islam and plotting against it. Duzzy's view is that the victory of Umayyads is certainly the victory of a group who had been nursing enmity and malice towards Islam.[1] Usman intentionally surrendered all government property to the Umayyads who directed the public wealth to their personal interests. They re-established their splendour and glory which had been tarnished by the glory of Islam. They took advantage of Usman's personal weakness and his strong love for them and "began to devour Allah's wealth like the devouring of a hungry camel exposed to newly grown green pasture at the onset of spring", as rightly described by Imam 'Ali ('a). This action caused widespread poverty and deprivation among the masses and consequently generated people's wrath and staunch criticism of his government.

One last important point that contributed towards the downfall of his government was that he entrusted the governorship of the different Islamic states to the Umayyads and the family of Abi Mu'ut, who neither had any experience of governmental policies nor administration of state affairs. Indeed some of them openly committed a lot of major sins. For instance, Walid Ibn Utba, his governor at Kufa, used to spend his nights drinking wine in the company of female singers. One day he led the dawn prayer while intoxicated and prayed four raka'ats instead of two, and said while in ruku and prostration, "I will drink so give me more drink." Then he vomited in the *Mihrab* (Chamber or niche in the mosque where the Imam stands to lead the Prayer). Then he terminated the prayers with the Salam and turned to the people who prayed behind him and said, 'Should I add more for you?' Ibn Mas'ud replied by saying, 'May Allah not increase you in good and may Allah not increase the person who has appointed you over us in good.' He took the pelt of his shoes and hit him on the face. The people threw stones at him. He entered

1- Tarikhu Sh'ir Arabi P.26.

his castle followed by raining pebbles. His actions showed his disbelief in and disrespect for the religion.[1]

Some prominent personalities of Kufa quickly went to Medina where they complained about Walid to Usman. They took Walid's ring which they removed from him along with them to show Usman. They told him about Walid's confession of being drunk. But they did not receive any positive response from him; instead, he retorted: 'How did you know that he had taken wine?' They replied, "It is the very wine that we used to drink during the days of ignorance."

Usman was furious and pushed them away by striking their chests with his fist. Then he humiliated them with some harsh and irritating words. They came out of his place burning with rage. They hastened towards Imam 'Ali ('a) and informed him of what had happened between them and Usman.

Imam 'Ali ('a) quickly went to him and said, "Do you push aside witnesses and make *Hudud* (Islamic legal punishment) invalid?"

Usman feared about what the consequences could be, so he said to Imam 'Ali ('a) "What do you see (in this matter)?" He said, "I see that you should summon your companion (i.e. Walid). If evidence or witnesses establish the allegations against him and he cannot defend himself, then you should declare legal punishment on him."

Usman acknowledged the advice of Imam 'Ali ('a) and sent for Walid. When he was brought before him, he called the witnesses to come and establish their case, so they established their testimony against him. He (Al-Walid) kept quiet and did not refute any of the allegations made against him, because he could not defend himself with any proof. He thus, deserved legal punishment. But no one among those present there dared offer to carry out this punishment on him for they were afraid of Usman, but Imam 'Ali ('a) came out to carry out the punishment (i.e. flogging) on him. Walid insulted him by saying: 'O Man of oppression'. Aqil quickly came out and insulted him back. Then he took hold of him and above him was the whip. Usman, burning with rage, could no longer control

1- Siratu Halabiyya Vol.2 P.314.

himself so he yelled out at Imam ‘Ali (‘a). ‘No! Don’t do that to him.’ Imam ‘Ali (‘a) replied from the perspective of *Sharia*, saying: “What is worse than someone disobeying (Allah swt) and executing Allah’s injunction upon him not being allowed.”

These incidents show the extent of Usman’s efforts to avoid punishing the members of his family and his obvious display of sympathy towards his corrupt relatives who never respected the commandments of Allah (swt).

Opposition forces against Usman

Many prominent and pious companions became resentful of Usman and his leadership. They made devastating and wide spread verbal attacks on him, criticizing him openly. The forces that opposed him were of a different nature. For instance, personal interests were what instigated Talha, Zubair, Aisha and Amr Ibn Aas. There was another group which included some eminent figures of Islam like Ammar Ibn Yasir *Taiyyib Ibn Taiyyib* (The pious son of the pious), the great Mujahid, Abu Zarr Al-Ghaffari, the great Qur’anic reader Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud, and those who had been tried in the way of God and had emerged victorious. They saw that (the ways of the Prophet (ṣ) *Sunnah* had been set aside while innovations were being revived. They saw that the truth was being denied while egoism was being encouraged. They, therefore, attacked Usman vehemently, rebuking him and demanding a change in his policies. They demanded the removal of Umayyad families from state affairs and the political arena as a whole. They did not criticise for any personal benefit but with the pure intention of serving Islam – but unfortunately, Usman did not listen to them.

Attacks on Usman

When all efforts and means to convince Usman failed, the fire of revolution was ignited. The revolutionists surrounded him, demanding his resignation, but he did not respond to their request. They demanded the removal of Marwan and the family of the Umayyads from his rule, but he turned away from them. On the other hand, when the situation worsened, those who were with him took flight leaving him alone. A group of Muslims attacked him. Among

those who assaulted him was Muhammad Ibn Abubakar, who gripped his beard and said to him, "May Allah disgrace you, O you infidel!" Usman replied, 'I am not an infidel but a servant of God and the leader of the believers.' Muhammad said, "Mu'awiya has not helped you (today) ….Then he started recalling the names of the Umayyads who were with him i.e. his government officials.

Usman was forced to humble himself before Muhammad and said, "O son of my brother! Let go of my beard, for your father did not hold that which you have held." Muhammad replied, "But what I want to do to you is more than merely hold your beard." Then Muhammad stabbed him with the unsheathed sword that was in his hand and was followed by the strokes of the revolutionaries which riddled his body. His body fell to the ground and no one among the Bani Umayyad or the family of Abi Mu'ut came to assist him. The agitators exceeded all bounds in humiliating him. They hung his body in a very disgraceful way in an open place and did not allow anyone to bury him until Imam 'Ali (ʿa) intervened. Thereafter, the revolutionaries allowed his body to be buried.

The life and rule of Usman ended in a horrible and disgraceful manner. The Muslims underwent difficult trials and upheavals because of his murder. The Umayyads actually profited from his murder, but they demanded compensation for his blood. Similarly, other groups took advantage of the murder and sought to take vengeance for his blood, groups like that of Talha, Zubair and Aisha, to pursue their selfish interests while they were the very people who had attacked and assassinated him.

The caliphate of Imam 'Ali *(ʿa)*

Imam 'Ali (ʿa) received the death of Usman with great annoyance. He knew the consequences of such incidents; the Umayyads were greedy for power so they would seize this opportunity to avenge his blood as a pretext to rebel and disobey any leadership besides their own, therefore, Imam 'Ali (ʿa) refused to accept the position of caliph. However, the people would not leave him alone. They gathered around him demanding his leadership, promising unconditional allegiance. He rejected their promises outright and said, "I am not interested in this and will be satisfied with any person you elect other

than me." Despite this, the people did not relent, and began to take measures that would force him to accept, declaring all the time: "We have no leader save you." They repeated this and added, "We will not choose any one except you".

Seeing that Imam ʻAli (ʻa) was adamant in his refusal to accept the caliphate, the armed forces held a meeting which they forced the Medinites and influential people to attend, and threatened to kill Imam ʻAli (ʻa), Zubair and Talha if they did not elect a leader for the Muslims.[1] After this, the Medinites rushed to Imam ʻAli (ʻa) overwhelmed with fear, and shouted *Al-Baiyya, Al-Baiyya,* (meaning oath of allegiance). Don't you see what affliction and trial we are facing from the people of this town?"

Imam ʻAli (ʻa) insisted on his refusal and said to them, "Leave me alone. Take hold of somebody else other than me."

Fully aware of the incidents and troubles he would face, he said, "O people we seek to accept a matter which has different faces and colours, and hearts cannot be straightened with it, nor intellects confirm it." However, they did not respond to his speech and went on chanting his name: "You are the Leader of the faithful; you are the Leader of the faithful."

Imam ʻAli (ʻa) explicitly clarified the policies he would adopt in his government if he was to accept the post, saying, "You should know that if I accept this position, I will lead you with what I know (of Islam). In that case, I will not listen to what people may have to say (contrary to it) and I will not entertain any criticism. If you leave me alone I will live like one of you and listen to you and accept whosoever you elect to lead your affairs; I feel that being your helper is better for you than to be your leader." But the people exclaimed: "We will never part from you until we pay the oath of allegiance to you!"

They trooped in to him from all angles demanding his acceptance of the mantle of caliphate. Imam ʻAli (ʻa) himself describes their insistence on paying allegiance to him thus: "They gathered around

1- Tarikh Ibn Athir 3:80.

like herds of rearing sheep, trooped on to me from all angles, nearly trampled Hasan and Husain and tore my cloak,"

The Imam's *(ʿa)* acceptance of the caliphate

Imam ʿAli (ʿa) could not do anything but accept the caliphate. One reason he gave for doing so was in his own words, "I did not accept it (i.e. the caliphate) except for the fear that some unqualified elements from among the children of the Umayyads would take up the leadership of the *Ummah* and then play with the book of Allah (swt).[1]

The people soon congregated into a great assembly. Imam ʿAli (ʿa) came forward amidst chanting of *Allahu Akbar* and *La ilaha Illa Allah*. Talha came forward and paid his oath of allegiance to him with his paralyzed hands, with which he soon broke the pledge of Allah the Most High. Imam ʿAli (ʿa): "Hands were not created to break their oaths." Then all the people paid their allegiance to him. Indeed, they were paying allegiance in reality to Allah (swt) and his Messenger (ṣ). Then the ceremony of taking the pledge ended. This kind of gigantic oath had never occurred before with any of the previous caliphs. The Muslims were delighted with it. Commenting on this, Imam ʿAli (ʿa) says: "The joy of the people's pledge to me reached such an extent that it made the infant rejoice, move an old man (i.e. made him take tremulous steps), and make the patients bear the (pangs of pain) and walk towards me with bare ankles."

The flag of justice and truth was raised on that day in the Islamic world and the dignity of Islam revived once again.

Decisive regulations

Imam ʿAli (ʿa) after taking over the government immediately enacted the following laws:

1. All lands given by Usman to the Umayyads to be returned.

2. The huge amounts of money that Usman gave to the Umayyads and the family of Abi Mu'ut as gifts to be returned.

1- Al-Aqdil Farid 2:92.

3. Usman's assets to be returned to the treasury, including his sword and armor.

4. All the governors dismissed, for they had displayed and spread oppression, tyranny and corruption on earth.

5. Muslims and their fellow citizens, even those who had not embraced Islam, to be treated equally.

The equality meant here includes the following:

a. Equality in distribution of goods and wealth.

b. Equality before law.

c. Equality in rights and duties.

These regulations struck a great blow to the Quraish for they would now have to return the wealth they had embezzled during the reign of Usman. They, thus, embarked upon rebellion. **They began to obstruct those political plans that aimed at propagating social and political justice coupled with equality among people.**

They began to ignite the fire of war against Imam ʻAli (ʻa) and strove to overthrow his government. Here we will give a very brief account of the wars that were fought against the patron of justice in Islam, the leader of those who make things clear, and the friend of those deprived.

The battle of Jamal

The battle of Jamal was the consequence of political greed. Mu'awiya deceived and tempted both Talha and Zubair with caliphate and promised to pay his oath of allegiance to them after they would overthrow the government of Imam ʻAli (ʻa). Aisha allowed herself to be carried away by the hatred and malice she had for Imam ʻAli (ʻa). Thus, these three persons formed an opposition party against Imam ʻAli (ʻa) in Mecca. Many other people who were also greedy for power were deceived by them, including simple minded persons. They formed an army with the support of military weapons and man-power provided by the Umayyads.

They spent huge amounts of money which they had embezzled and stolen from the Muslim public treasury when they were governors

during the reign of Usman. This army was under the command of Aisha, Talha and Zubair. They marched towards Basra and besieged it. There was a fierce battle between them and the people of Basra. When Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) learnt of this pocket rebellion, he marched out with his army to arrest and root them out. At last, the two armies met, Talha and Zubair were killed while Aisha who was the General and the Commander in chief of the army turned on her heels, while heavy troops and guards surrounded her camel. In this fight, there were many hands cut and many lives lost. After the battle, Aisha’s camel was brought to its knees and her army rooted out. This war inflicted great losses (on the Muslims) and enkindled division and enmity. Houses in Basra were filled with agony over the loss and the death of their beloved ones.

The battle of Siffin

Once again he had to face the worst kind of trial. Mu’awiya Ibn Abi Sufyan was made the governor of Syria without looking into his record of deeds. He had marched with his army towards Siffin in order to fight the Prophet’s (s) brother and the gate of knowledge. On reaching Siffin his army gained control of River Furaat and prevented Imam ‘Ali’s (ʿa) army from drinking from it. Mu’awiya regarded his action as the beginning of his victory over the Imam (ʿa).

Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) advanced with his army to face this cunning enemy and forestall his rebellion. The Imam’s army arrived at Siffin and found Mu’awiya forces blocking all roads leading to the river Furaat. Imam ‘Ali’s (ʿa) forces could not find any entrance to the river to quench their thirst while Mu’awiya’s army was adamant in their stance to prevent them getting water. The commanders of the various battalions of Imam ‘Ali’s (ʿa) army resolved to attack them and break the siege. They bravely attacked Mu’awiya’s forces and rooted them out of the Furaat water side and inflicted heavy losses on them. After gaining the upper hand some of the commanders in Imam ‘Ali’s (ʿa) army demanded that they should also prohibit Mu’awiya’s forces from fetching water just as they had done to them, but Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) refused this and did not permit their demand. This is because Islamic law does not allow it. Water is lawful for all, even animals.

The Imam (ʿa) then sent a delegation to Mu'awiya calling him to surrender and avoid shedding blood but Mu'awiya did not respond to him. Thus the fire of war between the two parties was ignited which continued to burn for two years. The worst calamity it inflicted was on the night of Harit during which nearly seventy thousand soldiers including their officers from both sides lost their lives. This incident weakened Mu'awiya's army seriously. All his commanders slipped away and he made up his mind to flee but when he remembered the poem of Ibn Itriabat he decided to stay.

The deception in lifting up the Holy Qur'ān

Imam 'Ali's (ʿa) army under the command of Malik Ashtar marched forward courageously towards Mu'awiya's forces. Victory was almost at hand, and Malik was about to capture Mu'awiya when suddenly the treacherous playboy Ibn Al-As came out with a plan with which he could disorganize Imam 'Ali's (ʿa) forces by creating turmoil and confusion. He decided to raise up the Qur'ān and call the two armies to the judgment of the Qur'ān with regard to the differences that had occurred between them. Mu'awiya's soldiers raised some copies of the Holy Qur'ān on spearheads and shouted that they wanted the Qur'ān to judge between them.

The plan worked well, for it was like a thunderbolt hitting the army of Imam 'Ali (ʿa). It completely gripped all the armed forces that were above twenty thousand soldiers. They all came forward demanding that Imam 'Ali (ʿa) should respond to the call of Qur'ānic judgment or the law of the Qur'ān. Imam 'Ali (ʿa) warned them that it was only a trick, because their army was now incapable of facing them. Unfortunately, these utterances of the Imam (ʿa) did not find place in their hearts, so they insisted and threatened to kill Imam 'Ali (ʿa) in case he did not carry out what they wanted, so Imam 'Ali (ʿa) was forced to accept and at that terrible critical moment, the government of Imam 'Ali (ʿa) came to an end.

The Al-Ashari Election

After that, Imam 'Ali (ʿa) witnessed another grievous episode which was the appointment of Al-Ashari as the representative of the Iraqis. Imam 'Ali (ʿa) rejected him but they forced him to accept the

nomination. The people of Syria nominated Amr Ibn As, so he deceived Al-Ashari by proposing that he Al-Ashari should remove Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) and that he would also remove Mu’awiya, and then they would make Abdullah Ibn Umar the new leader for the Muslims. Al-Ashari was happy with this decision so he accepted. When it was time for passing the judgment Al-Ashari announced that he had removed Imam ‘Ali (ʿa), hoping that Amr would remove Mu’awiya, but to his surprise Amr only came up to confirm Mu’awiya as the leader of the Muslims.

The Khawarij group

Chaos reigned in Imam ‘Ali’s (ʿa) army after this ruling. A group from his army rebelled and took on guerilla warfare. They passed judgements against Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) and ruled that he had become an infidel because he responded to the judgment of the Qur’ān. Strangely enough, they were the very people who had forced him to do that; they had raised the slogan saying: “There is no law except that of Allah,” but soon this slogan backfired and made some groups break away and result in an exchange of swords. Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) had proven his argument against them which nullified their claims. After this, some of them realized their mistake and came back to Imam ‘Ali (ʿa), while others persisted in their misguidance and ignorance. Thus, they started spreading corruption on the earth; they killed innocent people and spread terror and fear among people. Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) was forced to take up arms against them so as to quench their excesses; and that resulted in the battle of Nahrawan in which a, majority of them were killed.

This war did not end until the worst kind of rebellion manifested itself in Imam ‘Ali’s (ʿa) army. He made a call to fight Mu’awiya but none of them responded. Mu’awiya’s army had appeared on the political arena again as a great force, so it began occupying Islamic lands, and waging wars and raiding states that were under the jurisdiction of Imam ‘Ali’s (ʿa) government so as to show people that Imam ‘Ali (ʿa) was incapable of defending them.

Thus the Imam (ʿa) could see that Mu’awiya had firmly established himself while he had no power with which to ascertain the truth and root out or destroy falsehood.

The martyrdom of Imam ʻAli *(ʿa)*

Imam ʻAli (ʿa) then resorted to prayers, supplicating fervently to Allah (swt), asking Allah to relieve him of this misguided society, and transfer him to the home of truth so that he could complain to the Prophet (ṣ) of all that he had suffered in terms of disasters and misfortunes.

Allah (swt) answered his prayers. The sinful transgressor, like the person who hamstrung Prophet Salih's (ʿa) camel, Abdur-Rahman Ibn Muljim assassinated him while in the presence of Allah (swt) in the praying niche of the main Mosque of Kufa. Ibn Muljim struck him with a sword on his head. When the Imam (ʿa) felt the blow of the sword he exclaimed, *"By the Lord of Kaa'ba I have triumphed!"* The Leader of the pious ones indeed triumphed. His life ended struggling in the cause of Allah (swt) and in uplifting the truth, so Allah's peace be upon him the day he was born in Ka'aba and the day he was martyred in the house of Allah, the Most High.

Indeed, with his martyrdom the banner of true justice was folded up. The light of guidance shining in the Islamic world was extinguished. May his soul rest in perfect peace.

IMAM HASAN IBN ʻALI, AL-MUJTABA *(ʻA)*

He was the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ), resembling him in his forbearance, patience, generosity and kindness. The Prophet (ṣ) loved him and tried to inculcate love for him among the Muslims.

Many traditions were received concerning Imam Hasan (ʻa) with respect to his grand virtues and his great position with the Prophet (ṣ). Some of the traditions are:

1. Aisha reports that, the Prophet (ṣ) used to carry Hasan and embrace him and then say, "O Allah this is my son and I love him and I love the person who loves him."[1]

2. Al-Bara'a ibn Azib narrates: I saw the Prophet (ṣ) with Hasan on his on his shoulder saying: "O Allah I love him, so love him."[2]

3. Ibn Abbas narrated that the Prophet (ṣ) advanced towards us carrying Hasan on his shoulder. A man met him and said: 'O Child, what a fine ride you have! The Prophet (ṣ) said; "He is a fine rider, too."[3]

4. The Prophet (ṣ) said: "Whoever wishes to take a look at the leaders of the youth of paradise, should look at Hasan."[4]

5. The Prophet (ṣ) said: "Hasan is my sweet fragrance in this world."[5]

6. Anas narrates that Hasan came to the Prophet (ṣ) and I tried to distance him from him (ṣ). The Prophet (ṣ) said: Woe to you Anas! Leave my dear son and the fruit of my heart alone for verily whoever hurts him has hurt me and whoever hurts me has indeed hurt Allah (swt)."[6]

1- Kanzul Ummal 7:104, Majma'a Zawaid 9:176.
2- Sahihu Bukhari: in the chapter of virtues of Hasan and Husain 3:1370, Sahih Tirmizi 2:207.
3- Sawariq Muhriqa:82, Hiliyatul Awliya 2:35.
4- Al-Istiaab 2:369.
5- Bidayatu wan-Nihayatu 8:35, Fadaa'il Ashabu 165.
6- Kanzul Ummal 6:227

7. The Prophet (ṣ) prolonged his prostration in one of the night prayers, *Maghrib or Isha'i*, and after the termination of the prayers, the people asked him (ṣ) concerning that. He said, "My son (meaning Hasan) climbed over my back and I hate to hasten him down."[1]

8. Abdullah Ibn Abdur-Rahman Ibn Zubair narrated that among the family members of the Prophet (ṣ) the person who resembled him most and the one he loved most among them was Hasan. I have seen him in prostration while Hasan climbed over his neck or on his back. He would never make him descend until he descended himself. Indeed I have seen him, in *ruku'* (bowing position) allowing him to pass between his legs.[2]

Many traditions have been reported from the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) concerning the merits of his grandson, his sweet fragrance and fruit of his heart. We have dealt with this topic in the first part of our book *Hayatu-Imam Al-Hasan* (The life of Imam Hasan).

His upbringing

The Prophet (ṣ) himself was the one who took charge of the training and upbringing of his grandson, so he fed him with his high virtues and filled him with his personal strong and grand moral abilities. His father, Imam 'Ali (ʿa), also trained him; thus he got the best of trainers in the world of Islam. He implanted treasures of his personal noble traits and his great personal characteristics in him until he became his true picture. The Doyen of the women of the worlds, Zahra, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (s), his mother, had inculcated deep love for Allah (swt) and total trust in Him. Thus Imam Hasan (ʿa) grew up in the house of the Prophet (ṣ), the source of revelation, the centre of *Imamate*. He was the best example of Islamic training which was visible in his manners and personality.

His grand virtues

Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) was an embodiment of all grand and noble traits. The great qualities of his grandfather, the Prophet (ṣ),

1- Bidayatu wan-Nihaya 8:33.
2- Al-Isabatu 2:12.

were reflected in him. The two of them (i.e. Hasan and Husain) were the establishers of the values of Islamic civilization on earth. Imam Hasan (ʿa) reached the highest peak in virtues and merits; his clarity and firmness of judgment, his high power of reasoning, his utmost cautiousness, his forbearance, his gentleness of manner. These were just a few of his many good qualities.

His Imamate

The Prophet (ṣ) had publicly announced (to the people) that Hasan (ʿa) and his brother Husain (ʿa) were embodiments of the qualities possessed by Imams, when he declared; "Hasan and Husain are both Imams (leader) whether they rise or do not rise." It is necessary to explain the meaning of *Imamate* and the issues related to it to understand the greatness of the Imam.

Firstly: the meaning of *Imamate*

The scholars of *ilmul-Kalam* (scholastic theology) have defined it by saying: **"*Imamate* is the over all leadership in religious and worldly matters assigned to one person."** According to this definition, he is the general guide and leader to be followed; he has complete authority over people in all their religious and worldly affairs.

Secondly: the need for *Imamate*

Imamate is one of the essential necessities of life that we cannot do without. Things which are crooked in worldly and religious systems are straightened with it and the great justice desired by Allah (swt) on the earth is realized. General security and peace among people is realized. Further more, chaos, confusion and turmoil are repelled and it prevents the powerful from oppressing the weak.

The presence of *Imamate* is necessary to enjoin people to worship Allah (swt), spread his laws and teachings and feed society with the spirit of faith and piety. These can move man away from evil tendencies and direct him towards good. It is obligatory upon every member of the Islamic nation to follow him, carry out his orders, direct its curved and crooked matters and unify the disintegrated *Ummah* and guide it on to the right path.

Thirdly: duties of *Imamate*

In all situations, it is incumbent upon the leader of the Muslims to perform the following functions:

1. Safeguard the religion and protect it with virtues and ethics.

2. Execute laws, settle disputes and free the oppressed from the oppressors.

3. Defend the Islamic nation from external attacks, militarily and intellectually.

4. Establish punitive punishment and arrest all crimes that cause man's misfortune.

5. Protect the boundaries.

6. Fight in the cause of God (Jihad).

7. Collect the Zakat and taxes.

8. Make use of trustworthy people in enacting the law and not trust those who are selfish or egoistic.

9. Look into the problems of the citizens himself, and not depend on an intermediary to look into the problems of the subjects for him, for that is among the rights of the citizens.

10. Arrest joblessness, extend social welfare to all homes in the Islamic nation and save it from poverty and deprivation.

These are some of the compulsory duties of the Imam.

We have carried out a detailed study on these areas in our book: *Nizam Hukmi wal-Idara fil Islam* (System of law and administration in Islam).

Fourthly: his personal qualifications

An Imam must possess the following:

1. Justice - abstain from committing major sins and not persist in minor sins.

2. Knowledge - of all what the people are in need of and acquaintance with (social) traditions and Islamic laws.

3. Physical Fitness - of sense organs, like hearing, sight and tongue, so that he can comprehend things directly. It is compulsory that he be physically healthy and not handicapped.

4. Foresight and administrative acumen - of the state and the welfare of the people.

5. Bravery, valour and power to defend the Islamic state and fight the Holy war *Jihad* against the enemy.

6. Ancestry: that is the Imam must be from the Quraish.

Al-Mawridi and Ibn Khaldun have both mentioned these conditions and qualities.[1]

7. **Infallibility**: as defined by the scholars of scholastic theology. It **is a special favour from Allah (swt) bestowed upon His most perfect servant with which he refrains from committing crimes and sins intentionally or unmindfully. Shi'as are unanimous that it must be present in an Imam.** The tradition of the two weighty things also points to this fact. The Prophet (ṣ) combined the Qur'ān and his progeny, therefore, if the Qur'ān is error-free so also is his pure household (ʿa), otherwise there is no sense in making a comparison between them or joining them together. These qualities have not been found in any person except in the Imams of the household of the Prophet (ṣ) who were the builders of Islam, its defenders and guides towards Allah's pleasure and obedience.

Al-Kamiya, a poet of Islamic ideology, has described them saying:

Verily the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) have shown

Through their lives that they are infallible

His appointment

The Shi'as are of the opinion that the appointment of an Imam is not in the hands of people, nor in the hands of those in authority. Thus, holding elections with regard to *Imamate* is null and void, and choosing anyone for it is impossible, so its solution is like that of

1- Ahkam Sultaniya:4 Al-Muqadimati 135.

Prophethood because the *Isma* (infallibility) which is a condition in *Imamate* is not known by anyone except Allah (swt).

This has justified the proof of the household of Muhammad (ṣ) as the rightful guides of this Ummah. Sa'ad Ibn Abdullah asked the Imam (ʿa) why the people could not choose their Imams for themselves. He (ʿa) replied, "Will they choose one who is righteous or one who is corrupt?" He said, "Of course one who is righteous." Then he asked, "Is it possible that they choose corrupt persons thinking that they are good because no one knows what is in the mind?" He said, "Of course." Then he said, "What can you say about the Messengers chosen by Allah (swt) and given (heavenly) books and supported with revelation and *Isma* (infallibility) for they were the most learned among their nations? They were the most guided among the selected ones, like Musa and Isa (ʿa). Is it possible that, in spite of their strong power of reasoning, if they were allowed to choose, they would choose hypocrites considering them to be true believers?" He said, "No". The Imam (ʿa) said, "Musa (ʿa) chose some eminent figures from his people and great ones out of his soldiers in order to meet with his Lord. These were men about whose faith and sincerity there was no doubt, but his choice fell upon hypocrites. Allah (swt) said, **"And Musa chose of his people seventy men for our appointment."**[1] **"They said: "Show us Allah openly." Then a destructive punishment overtook them because of their transgressing."** Therefore, after knowing that even the choice of one whom Allah (swt) has chosen for Prophethood had selected corrupt people rather than the righteous, we understand that choosing (an Imam) is not the work of any one but Allah, who knows what the heart conceals and what the mind hides."

Verily human ability is incapable of comprehending the best person that can lead the nation, thus, his appointment is not in the hands of the people, but in the hands of Allah (swt), the Knower of all secret matters.

This is just a brief account of Imamate; interested individuals can find details in the books of scholastic theology *Kalām*.

1- Suratul *Al-Araf*: 155.

His noble character

Imam Hasan (ʿa) inherited the noble character of his honourable grandfather. Historians have narrated a number of incidents as proof of his noble character, among which is this one: A man from Syria passed by him when suddenly he started abusing him with provocative words, but Imam Hasan (ʿa) kept quiet, and did not say anything in reply to him. After he had finished insulting him, Imam Hasan (ʿa) confronted him with a smile full of kindness, and said: "O gentleman, I guess you are a stranger. If you are in need of anything we would like to give it to you. If you want us to guide you in anything we shall guide you; if you need something to ride on we will provide it to you; if you are hungry we can feed you; if you are needy we can make you rich; and if you are driven out of your home we can provide you with accommodation."

Imam Hasan (ʿa) continued to show him courtesy until the man was amazed and could not find courage to reply. He became confused as to how he should apologize and cleanse himself of the sin he had committed. Then he spoke, "Allah knows best where to put His message and in whomsoever He desires."

Another incident revealing his courteous behaviour was that he was sitting and was about to leave when a poor man came to him. He welcomed him kindly, then said to him: "You have come to sit down at the time we need to go. Please grant me leave to go?" The poor man was nonplussed by his extreme politeness and immediately gave permission.

Once he passed by a group of poor men who were eating some pieces of bread and they invited him to join them. He accepted their invitation and sat with them. While eating with them he recited: **"Allah does not love one who is arrogant or haughty."** Then he invited them to be his guests. There he fed them, gave them clothes and bestowed on them plenty of his abundant favours.

His forbearance

Among the most conspicuous of his qualities was his great forbearance. He gave gifts generously and abundantly to those who had offended him or caused him harm. He once found out that the leg

of his goat was broken so he asked his servant: "Who did this to it? The servant said: "I did." He asked: Why?" He said, "In order to provoke you and make you angry." The Imam Hasan (ʿa) said, "I will surely set you free."[1]

His worst enemy Marwan Ibn Hakam has confessed and acknowledged the great forbearance of Imam Hasan (ʿa). When the Imam (ʿa) passed away, Marwan came hurriedly to participate in the funeral procession and offered to help carry his body. Imam Husain (ʿa) was surprised and asked him, "Today you make haste to carry his body while yesterday you were inflicting harm on him?" Marwan replied, "You are right, I was doing that to a man whose patience and forbearance was equal to the weight of mountains."[2]

His generosity

Imam Hasan (ʿa) was the most generous person of his time and the most excellent of men in terms of kindness to the poor. He had never turned away a single beggar in his life. Once a person asked him, "Why have you never turned away a beggar? He said, "This is because I beg from God, so I feel shy to turn away beggars while I am also a beggar. Allah has promised me to provide me with His Favours and I promised Him to provide people with His Favours; thus, I fear if I suspend the favour, He will also deprive me of His Favour." Then he recited:

"Whenever a beggar comes to me I say welcome

O you, hastening to favour you is obligatory upon me

O He, whose Favours are above all favours

The best days for a young man are those when he is asked for something".[3]

1- Maqtal Husain (Al-Khawarizimi) Vol.1 P.147.
2- Sharh Nahjul Balaga (Ibn Abi Hadid) 4:5.
3- Nuru Absar: 111.

Delegations of the poor and the needy people used to frequent his house and he would always provide for them generously. Some incidents are mentioned below:

Once a village-Arab came to beg for something. He ('a) said to his servant, "Give him what we have in the treasury." There were ten thousand dirhams in the treasury. Then the village-Arab said to him:

Oh Sir, you have made me independent of my needs

Permit me to recite some words in your praise.

Then the Imam replied saying:

We are the people whose gift quenches

The thirst of hope and ambition

It is received before we are asked

To protect the image of those who ask for help.

If the Ocean knew the greatness of what it gives out

It would overflow out of shame.[1]

Imam Hasan ('a) passed by a black slave boy who was holding a loaf of bread in his hand: he was eating a piece and throwing a piece of it to a dog that was beside him. Watching what he was doing, Imam Hasan ('a) asked him: "What made you to do that?" He answered: "I would feel shy eating alone without feeding it while it was looking at me."

Imam Hasan ('a) noticed that the slave boy possessed a noble character so he decided to reward him for what he did and pay him for his propagation of righteousness. He ('a) said to the boy, "Stay where you are (I am coming)". He went and bought the boy and the garden in which he was working from his master. He then freed him and gave him the garden.[2]

1- A'ayan Shi'a Vol.3 P.89 to 90.
2- Al-Bidayatu Wannihaya 8:38.

Imam Hasan (ʿa) once passed through one of the streets of Medina and heard a man asking Allah to give him ten thousands dirhams. He rushed home and sent the amount to him.[1]

However, these are only a few of the many incidents found in history. We have mentioned a great deal of his grand nobility in the first part of the book: *Hayatu Imam Hasan (ʿa)*, (i.e. Life of Imam Hasan (ʿa).

His ascetic life

The abstinence of Imam Hasan (ʿa) was visible in all fields of life. He directed his emotions towards Allah (swt) and was satisfied with very little from the provisions of this life. He said: "Indeed, a piece of bread, a mouthful of pure water, a piece of fine cloth to cover me while I am alive, and when I die, my shroud is sufficient for me."

He printed on his ring two lines of a poem that depict his abstinence. The two lines are as follows:

Send forth for yourself much piety, as much as you can

Verily, death has already descended upon you, young man!

You rise in the morning feeling happy because you have not seen

Your beloved ones, hungry in their graves, now rotting

Muhammad Ibn Babawaih has written a book concerning the ascetic life of Imam Hasan (ʿa) named *Zuhdul-Imam Hasan* (Ascetic life of Imam Hasan (ʿa).[2] Expert biographers have unanimously agreed that he was the most ascetic among people.

His intellectual gift

Imam Hasan (ʿa) was considered the source of knowledge. He was the sole authority people referred to throughout the Islamic world. Companions and contemporaries used to troop in to benefit from his knowledge. A great number of the companions have narrated traditions from him.

1- Tabaqati Kubra (Ashirany) 1:23, Asibban:117.
2- Hayatu-Imam Hasan (as) 1:328.

It is pertinent to mention here that Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Adaulabi (who died in the year 320 A.H) has written a treatise on him which he included in his book *Zurriyyatu Tayyiba* (i.e. pious descendants). He has recorded in it what Imam Hasan (ʿa) had narrated from his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (ṣ).[1]

His short wise quotes

"Live in this world with your physical body but with your heart concerned with the Hereafter."[2]

"Regard whatever you are not able to get successfully of the world as if it had never occurred to you."[3]

"Bad conduct is the worst misfortune."[4]

"Do not respond to whosoever begins to talk to you without starting with the greeting of *Salam* (peace)."[5]

He said to a man who had been cured of his illness "Verily Allah has remembered you so remember Him; He has also set you free so be grateful to Him."[6]

"Favour is a severe trial, if you are grateful it will be a treasure but if you are ungrateful it will become a disaster."[7]

Some of his sermons

Imam Hasan (ʿa) was an eloquent and most distinguished orator. The following are some of his sermons:

1. Once Imam 'Ali Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa) called him to address the people. He climbed the pulpit and addressed the people thus: "O

1- In the scripts of the Ahmadiyya Library in the University of Zaituna which was photo copied in Imam Amirul Mu'minin's Library, we have mentioned a great part of the treatise in the first part of Hayatu-Imam Hasan.
2- Sharh Nahjul Balaga (Ibn Abi Hadid) 18:89.
3- Sharh Nahjul Balaga (Ibn Abi Hadid) 18:89.
4- Nahju Sa'aada 8:280.
5- Kashfu Gumma 2:197.
6- Biharu Anwar Vol.75:106.
7- Tazkiratu Ibn Hamdun:25.

people! Ponder deeply concerning your Lord, **"Verily Allah (swt) chose Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above all peoples; a race co-related with one another. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."** Thus, we are the children of Adam's offspring through the family of Noah and from Abraham and Ismail and the family of Muhammad (ṣ). We are among you just like the raised high Heavens and the earth spread out, and the Sun, like the tree of *Zaitun* (neither east nor west) with its oil blessed. The Prophet (ṣ) is its root and ʻAli (ʻa) is its stem, and we are its branches: whosoever cleaves to any of its branches will attain salvation, whosoever lags behind will surely fall in Hellfire".

Three of his most important sermons which deal with the issue of moral ethics have been mentioned here:

"Know that intellect is protection, forbearance is beauty, while fulfilling promises is good conduct; hastening (to do something) is foolish and foolishness is weakness; keeping company with those who are materialistic is bad; mixing with those who are disobedient to God is a sign of uncertainty (in one's faith). Whosoever belittles his fellow brother has indeed destroyed his prestige. No one will be ruined except those who are doubtful, while the rightly guided ones will be saved; they are those who never in their life accuse Allah, even for the twinkling of an eye, not even in matters of their means of livelihood. Their prestige is perfect and their modesty is perfect, they always wait patiently until they are given their means of sustenance. They do not sell anything of their religion nor their prestige in exchange for worldly bargains; they do not seek anything from it (the world) through means that include disobedience to Allah (swt)".

"For a man to hasten to fulfill the need of his fellow brother even if he did not complain to him is part of kindness. Wit is the best of all bounties which Allah (swt) has bestowed on mankind because it is with it that he achieves his salvation in this world and his safety from the punishment in the Hereafter."

"It is said that once a man was praised for his excellent worship in the presence of the Prophet (ṣ). Then he (ṣ) looked at his intellect because

a servant (of God) would be rewarded on the day of resurrection according to his level of intelligence, and good conduct is an evidence of sound intellect…"[1]

His worship

Imam Hasan ('a) was the best of worshippers during his time. One of the narrators of the prophetic traditions said about him, "He was always seen busy in the remembrance of Allah (swt).[2] Whenever paradise or hell-fire was mentioned, he would suddenly become afflicted with illness, and ask Allah (swt) for paradise and seek refuge with Allah (swt) from hell-fire. Whenever events of after - death like the opening of the book of ones deeds was mentioned, he would weep like the *Khashiin* {those who really fear Allah (swt)} and like *Munibiin* {those who often turn to Allah (swt)}. If something was mentioned against Allah (swt), he would groan with such pain that people feared he would die. His complete obedience to and fear of Allah (swt) is clearly portrayed in these descriptions.

His ablution and prayers

Whenever Imam Hasan ('a) wanted to perform ablution, his condition both outwardly and inwardly would change because of his fear of Allah (swt). His colour would turn pale and the muscles beneath his shoulder blades would tremble and shiver terribly. Once, asked about the reason for that, he said: "It is proper for whoever stands before the Lord of the Throne, that his flesh tremble and his colour turn pale." Whenever he had finished from ablution and wanted to enter into a mosque, he would raise his voice and say: "My Lord, Your guest is at Your door, O doer of good, the doer of bad has come to you, so pardon our evil with Thy good, O Generous One!"[3]

When he approached prayer, his body would shiver and tremble with fear.[4] When he finished the dawn prayers he would remain silent and

1- Irshad Qulub: 239.
2- Amali Saduq: 108.
3- Amali Saduq: 108.
4- Hayatu Imam Hasan (as) 1:327.

not talk but remain engrossed in the remembrance of God until sunrise.[1]

His pilgrimage

His devotion and obedience to Allah (swt) can be gauged from the fact that he performed pilgrimage to the holy house of Allah in Mecca twenty five times on foot while the guides who were riding would be leading in front of him.[2] When asked why he had performed such a great number of pilgrimages on foot he said; "This is because I would feel ashamed before my Lord if I did not walk on my feet while proceeding to His house."[3]

His giving alms with his wealth

Imam Hasan (ʿa) in seeking Allah's (swt) pleasure gave all he possessed in the cause of Allah (swt). Thus, twice he gave away all his possessions and thrice he shared his belongings equally with Allah (swt).[4]

He was indeed the leader of the pious ones and the advocate of unity, *Sayyid ul Muttaqin wal Muwahhidin.*

Accused of having many wives

Imam Hasan (ʿa) has been accused of marrying many wives. It is alleged that he married three hundred women.[5] This allegation is nothing but an open lie and fabrication that has no element of truth in it. This was one of the many lies deliberately forged against Imam Hasan (ʿa) by Al-Mansur Dawaniq at the time when the followers of Imam Hasan (ʿa) revolted against his kingdom. This revolution greatly shook the mantle of Dawaniq's leadership and almost ruined his authority and state power. For this reason he fabricated many lies against Imam ʿAli (ʿa) and his offspring, seeking to blackmail and defame them with that.

1- Biharul Anwar 10:93.
2- Lumma Kitabul-Hajj (chapter of pilgrimage) 2:170.
3- A'ayani Shi'a 4:11.
4- Asadul Ghabah 2:12.
5- Hayatu Iman Hasan (as) 2:453.

Furthermore, another reason that points to the fact that those narrations were forged is that if the allegation were true, then Imam Hasan (ʿa) should have more children with such a large number of wives, but contrary to that, the reasonable number which *Nisabun* has mentioned concerning his children is twenty-two, comprising both male and female. This number (logically) does not in any way conform to the great number of women they claimed he had married. They also alleged that he was always divorcing his wives. If that was true, he should have divorced his wife Jawda, the daughter of Ashath whom he knew was the architect behind poisoning him but he did not do that.

We have indeed established this with strong and decisive proofs that cleanse the Imam from such allegations in the second path of our book *Hayatu Imam Hasan Ibn ʻAli (ʿa)*.

His caliphate

While the Islamic world was mourning the painful and tragic demise of Imam ʻAli (ʿa) the patron of social justice, Imam Hasan (ʿa) mounted the Islamic caliphate surrounded by tense conditions and difficult and unfavourable circumstances. His armed forces were afflicted with disobedience of the majority of the high ranking personnel who were, in turn, afflicted with comfort and luxury. They were already fed up with wars. They were influenced by the Khawarij who accused Imam ʻAli (ʿa) of infidelity and abandoning the religion of Islam.

Simultaneously, some political gang leaders among his armed forces were calling others to disobey and rebel against Imam Hasan (ʿa). Among the most painful trials Imam Hasan (ʿa) underwent was the trial and persecution he suffered from the commanders of his own armed forces. Ubaidullah Ibn Abbas the general commander-in-chief of his armed forces was in the forefront. He betrayed Allah (swt), His Messenger (ṣ) and the Muslims. He wrote to Mu'awiya offering him their loyalty and obedience, and ready to carry out his orders. He assured him that if he wished they could assassinate Imam Hasan (ʿa) or arrest him and hand him over to him as a prisoner. Ubaidullah Ibn Abbas received a bribe from Mu'awiya so he withdrew from the Imam's (ʿa) army and joined Mu'awiya's army at night. He left the

remaining soldiers in Imam Hasan's (ʿa) army swimming in the ocean of doubts. He had paved the way of rebellion for those who were weak in faith or simple-minded, so most of them rushed to join Mu'awiya's army on receiving bribes. Imam Hasan (ʿa) was surrounded with such terrible crises and trials that made the earth constrained for him. The soldiers who had turned their back on Islam deliberately stabbed him on his thigh while he was praying before Allah (swt). In the face of all these difficult trials and tribulations, Imam Hasan (ʿa) could do nothing except to yield to patience. He saw that there were only two things he could do and nothing else.

Firstly, that he should fight Mu'awiya with his remaining disintegrated and disheartened soldiers, in which case there was no chance of success or victory over the enemy. He would risk himself, the Hashimi and their Shi'as by sacrificing their leader who was the defender of the religion and the guide to the straight path of Allah (swt). Similarly, it is important to note that if Imam Hasan (ʿa) was taken prisoner, Mu'awiya would certainly try to show that he had done a favour to him by freeing him. Thus, cleansing the image of the *Tulaqa'a* (freedom) bestowed on his relatives and ancestors by the Prophet (ṣ) on the day of the conquest of Mecca. By this act he would avenge his family's disgrace at the hands of the Prophet (ṣ). And that would be have been a great victory for the Umayyads while at the same time Imam Hasan's (ʿa) sacrifice would not be seen by the people as anything but wrong doing.

Secondly, another possibility was to make peace with Mu'awiya despite the odious things and worries behind the throat. He would then leave Mu'awiya alone with his transgression. His evil secrets and his negative response to Islam would be exposed. It would also expose his deeds, his wickedness and hypocrisy to the people. In fact, that really did happen later on in a very clear way without any ambiguity. After his peace treaty with Imam Hasan (ʿa), Mu'awiya addressed the people of Iraq saying, "O people of Iraq, by God I have not fought you in order that you should establish *Salat* (prayers) or that you should observe *Saum* (fast) or give the *Zakkat* (poor rate) or to perform the *Hajj* pilgrimage. In fact I have fought you because I want to rule over you and God has granted me that, but it seems you

people hate it. Lo! Listen carefully, surely all that I have promised Hasan Ibn 'Ali is invalid and lies under my two feet".

Thus, there was nothing good in the peace treaty between Imam Hasan (ʿa) and Mu'awiya except that it showed Mu'awiya's deeply ignorant ways, his vicious racism and his wicked nature. It also showed that he had no element of Islamic spirit and guidance in his soul. It also showed that he was like his father, Abu Sufyan, who was a number one enemy to the Prophet (ṣ); was also like his mother, Hind, who had chewed the liver of the Martyred Hamza and then mutilated his body with the worst and indescribable kind of mutilation. He had inherited this enmity towards Islam and a strong hatred towards the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) from them.

In any case, Imam Hasan (ʿa) chose to enter into a peace treaty while he was the rightful candidate appointed by *Sharia* (Islamic law).

Imam Hasan (ʿa) stipulated some conditions in the peace treaty with Mu'awiya, which clearly stressed that he should not regard himself as an Islamically elected leader of the Muslim community, and avoid calling himself *Amirul Mu'minin* (i.e. the leader of the faithful ones) because he was a dictator and despotic leader ruling with injustice and tyranny. Similarly, he (ʿa) also stipulated the condition that he should not use the Book (the Qur'ān) and the Prophetic traditions in any aspect of his political manipulations or dealings.

Surely, if he were a trustworthy and reliable Muslim Imam Hasan (ʿa) would not have stipulated such conditions for him.

Not only did Mu'awiya not comply or fulfill any of these conditions, he broke them all without exception. We have mentioned that in detail in our book *Hayatu-Imam Hasan (ʿa)*.

Mu'awiya's politics strongly embarked on contradicting the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ). He slaughtered innocent people and those who demanded peace and equity; among whom were great companions like Hijr Ibn Ady, Amr Ibn Al-Hamaq Al-Khizaiy. He destroyed the honour of many Muslims and detained women as captives. He squandered and robbed the public treasury. His government was full of corrupt officials like Ibn Aas, Ibn Sha'aba, Ibn Artah, Ibn Hakam, and Ibn Marjana. One among them was Ibn Samiyyah, whom he separated from his lawful father Ubaidu

Rumi and joined him to his own father, the insolent Abu Sufyan. He imposed him as a leader over Iraqi Shiites to mete out terrible punishment on them, slaughter their sons and spare their women, burn their houses and loot their wealth etc.

One of his worst crimes and offenses (committed against humanity) was his killing of Imam Hasan (ʿa). He prepared a deadly poison that he passed to the Imam's (ʿa) wife, Juda bint Ashath to pour into his water. He (i.e. Mu'awiya) deceived her by promising to marry her to his son Yazid (after) she poisoned Imam Hasan (ʿa), so she poisoned Imam Hasan (ʿa) on the day he was fasting. The poison did its job. His soul departed from this world.

Mu'awiya finished his vicious crimes by appointing his irresponsible and notorious son, Yazid, as his successor upon the Muslims.

IMAM HUSAIN IBN ʻALI ASH-SHAHEED *(ʿA)*

He is the builder of Islam and great saviour of the Islamic world that had fallen prey to the hands of the *Umawiyyun* who afflicted Islam with all kinds of vices and persecutions, slaughtering their sons and sparing their women. They took Allah's wealth as booty and His servants as their possessions. They executed and passed death sentences on the best people of society and many pious men; they spread terrorism and fear among the Muslims.

Their vicious atrocities and crimes spread everywhere; there was poverty and deprivation generally all over the (Islamic) states. For this reason, Imam Husain (ʿa) rose and confronted all these with great valour, steadfastness, strong determination and great hope like that of the Prophet (ṣ). He carried out his great revolution which was like an explosion, reinstated Allah's (swt) book and made the revolution a lesson for men of understanding. It demolished their base, arrested their vain splendor and haughtiness, and spread political and religious awareness among the Muslims. It removed from them the disease of fear which they had been afflicted with and they were freed from the pressure of enslavement and humiliation. Indeed, they were liberated from all kinds of negative and blameworthy acts which they were subjected to. There emerged powerful uprisings, after people had been made inactive, calling and seeking their rights in the several revolutions that took place until the Umawiyyun government was overthrown... Here we present some of the many events of this great Imam (ʿa) whose sacrifice, steadfastness, patience and rejection (of tyranny) has become immortal.

Prophet's love for Husain *(ʿa)*

The Prophet (ṣ) dearly loved Imam Husain (ʿa) his grand son. Some of the traditions that portray the great position he (ʿa) held are mentioned below:

On the authority of Jabir Ibn Abdullah the Prophet (ṣ) said: "Whoever wishes to see the leader of the youths of paradise should look at Husain Ibn ʻAli (ʻa)."[1]

Abu Huraira reports: I saw the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) carrying Husain Ibn ʻAli and saying: "O Allah I love him, so love him."[2]

Yu'ala Ibn Marra narrates: "We went out with the messenger of Allah (ṣ) for a dinner that we were invited to. Suddenly there was Husain (ʻa) playing with a coin. The prophet (ṣ) stretched his (blessed) hand towards him. The little boy began to run here and there while the Prophet (ṣ) made him laugh. He carried him and placed one of his hands under his chin and the other one on the back of his head and kissed him; then said, "Husain is from me and I am from Husain. May Allah love whoever loves Husain; Husain, my grandson."[3]

This tradition relates the deep and strong relationship that existed between the Prophet (ṣ) and Imam Husain (ʻa). Imam Husain was in fused with the same spirit, goals and objectives of the Prophet (ṣ), i.e. reforming society and lifting its standard of life.

As for his statement (ṣ): *"I am from Husain"* refers to what Imam Husain (ʻa) would do in future by sacrificing everything for the sake of Islam. Indeed, the Prophet (ṣ) is definitely from Imam Husain (ʻa) because he revived his religion and saved it from the hands of those leaders who fought against the existence of Islam and strove to restore the days of Ignorance. Imam Husain (ʻa) by sacrificing himself blasted and demolished the deadly plots of the Umayyads and at the same time saved the Muslims from their brutality and oppression.

On the authority of Salman Farisi: "I went into (the house of) the Prophet (ṣ) while Husain Ibn ʻAli was on his thigh. He (ṣ) was kissing his mouth and saying, *"You are a leader and son of a leader, and you are an Imam and son of an Imam, and the brother of an Imam and father of an Imam. You are Allah's proof and the son of His proof and*

1- Siyari A'alamu Nubala 3:190, Tarikh Ibn Asakir (written with hand) 13:50.
2- Mustadraki Hakim 3:177 and in Nuru Absar 129 in it, it comes like this: "Oh Allah! I love him and I love whosoever loves him."
3- Sunani Ibn Maja 1:56, Musnad Ahmad 4:172, Asadul Ghabah 2:19, Tahzibu Kamal: 71, Taisiru Wusul 3:276, Mustadrak Hakim 3:177.

the father of the nine proofs; all of them are from your offspring, the ninth of them being he who will rise."

On the authority of Ibn Abbas: "The Prophet (ṣ) was carrying Husain (ʿa) on his shoulder when a man said: "Oh child, what an excellent ride you have," to which the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) replied: *"Do you not see how excellent the rider is?"*

On the authority of Yazid Ibn Abi Ziyad who said: The Prophet (ṣ) came out of the house of Aisha and passed by the house of Fatima (ʿa). Therein, he heard Imam Husain crying loudly, so he said to Fatima (ʿa), *"Don't you know that his crying hurts me?"*

These were some of the numerous traditions of the Prophet (ṣ) concerning his love for his grandson Imam Husain (ʿa).

The Prophet *(ṣ)* and Imam Husain's *(ʿa)* martyrdom

The Prophet (ṣ) had spoken so often of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (ʿa) that the Muslims were sure that he would be martyred. Ibn Abbas said; "We never doubted the fact that the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) were fully aware that the Imam (ʿa) would be martyred at *Taff* (Karbala)".

The Prophet (ṣ) had indeed received the news through Jibrail (ʿa) that his grandson Husain (ʿa) would be afflicted with a calamity whose evil impact would effect the surroundings and melt mountains; as a result of this information he used to weep bitterly for him.

An almost similar tradition repeated by many wives and others about the issue is presented:

On the authority of Ummi Fadl bint Ḥarith: "Husain was once in my custody. When I entered the room of the Prophet (ṣ) my eyes fell on him and I found him weeping. I said, 'O Prophet of Allah, may my father and mother be your ransom, what is wrong?' He said, "Jibrail came to me and informed me that my *Ummah* would kill this son of mine", pointing towards Husain (ʿa). I was disturbed and amazed and said, 'They will kill your grandson, Husain?' The Prophet (ṣ) replied: "Yes. Jibrail (ʿa) even brought me part of the soil of the land where he would be killed, and it was red." I was overwhelmed with crying and shared the Prophet's (ṣ) sorrow and grief."

On the authority of the mother of the faithful, Ummi Salama: "One night the Prophet (ṣ) retired to bed, then suddenly woke up, visibly disturbed. Then he went back to sleep again and after a while woke up again, this time even more worried. Then he went to sleep again and woke up with a start and in his hands was red soil which he began to kiss.[1] I asked him, what that soil was. He said: "Jibrail (ʿa) informed me that my Husain would be killed on Iraqi soil. I asked Jibrail (ʿa) to show me part of the earth where he would be killed and this is the soil of that land."

On the authority of Ummi Salama again: One day, the Prophet (ṣ) was in my house and he said, "Please do not allow anyone to come inside to me." I, therefore, remained vigilant, when Imam Husain (ʿa) entered. Thereafter, I heard the groan of the Prophet (ṣ), and then I entered and saw that Husain (ʿa) was on his thigh and he (ṣ) was caressing his head and weeping. I apologized to him, thinking that Imam Husain's entry had disturbed him…but he (ṣ) said to me "Verily Jibrail (ʿa) was with us in the house and he asked pointing at Husain: "Do you love him? I said certainly. Then he said surely the people of your *Ummah* will kill him at a place called Karbala. Then Jibrail (ʿa) took part of the earth of Karbala and showed it to me."[2]

On the authority of Aisha: Husain ibn ʿAli came to the Prophet (ṣ) while he was receiving a revelation and jumped into his lap, so he shouldered him. Then Jibrail (ʿa) said; "Do you love him, O Muhammad? He said, "Why should I not love my son." He said, "Surely, your *Ummah* will kill him after you." Then Jibrail stretched his hand and gave him white soil and said, "Your son will be killed in this soil, its name is *Taff*. When Jibrail (ʿa) left, the Prophet (ṣ) held the piece of soil in his hand crying, "O Aisha! Verily Jibrail informed me that my son, Husain, will be killed on the soil of Taff and that surely the people of my *Ummah* would be afflicted with trials (and tribulations) after me." Then the Prophet (ṣ) went out weeping to (meet) his companions, who were ʿAli (ʿa), Abubakar, Umar,

1- Verily, the Shi'as prostrate on a piece of molded *turba* or earth from Karbala and it was the one the Prophet (saw) was kissing.
2- Kanzul Ummal Vol.7 P.106, Sair A'alam Nablaa Vol.3 P.15, Zakhairil Uqbi P.138.

Huzaifa, Ammar and Abu Zarr. Concerned, they asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what makes you cry?" He said, "Jibrail informed me that my son, Husain, would certainly be killed after me on the land of Taff. He brought this soil to me and told me that in it would be his resting place."[1]

On the authority of Zainab bint Jahsh who was one of the wives of the Prophet (ṣ): The Prophet (ṣ) was sleeping while Husain was crawling about in the room. I was unmindful of him until he came to the Prophet (ṣ) and climbed upon him, waking him up. He got up and started praying while hugging Husain to himself. Whenever he bowed or prostrated he would place him down and whenever he rose and sat down to supplicate with his hands raised he would carry him When he finished his prayers I said to him: "O Allah's apostle, indeed today I saw you doing something which I have never seen you doing before." He said, "Jibrail came to me and informed me that my son would be killed and I asked him to show me (where), and he brought this red soil."[2]

On the authority of Ibn Abbas: Imam Husain was in the lap of the Prophet (ṣ) when Jibrail (ʿa) said: "Do you love him?" He said, "How can I not love him while he is the fruit of my heart." Then he said: "Surely, your people will kill him. Should I show you the place of his grave?" Then he took hold of something. Suddenly it was soil, red in colour."[3]

On the authority of Abu Umama: I heard the Prophet (ṣ) himself say: "Do not make this child cry" i.e., Husain (ʿa). He continued: "It was Ummi Salama's turn when Jibrail (ʿa) descended. The Prophet (ṣ) went inside the house and said to Ummi Salama, "Do not allow anyone to enter." Thereafter, Husain came and when he saw that the Prophet (ṣ) was inside the room he wanted to enter. She quickly picked him up and hugged him to herself, singing a song for him and trying to comfort him. When his crying increased she left him alone, so he entered and sat on the lap of the Prophet (ṣ). Then Jibrail (ʿa) said to

1- Majma Zawāid 9:187.
2- Majma Zawāid: 187.
3- Majma Zawāid: 191.

the Prophet (ṣ) "Surely your people will kill this son of yours." He said: "Will they kill him while they still believe in me?" He said "Yes, of course, they will still kill him." Then he fetched a piece of the soil for the Prophet (ṣ) and said he would be killed in this place. The Prophet (ṣ) came out hugging Husain (ʿa), overwhelmingly grieved and upset about this. Ummi Salama thought he was unhappy because of the child entering the room, so she said: "O Allah's apostle! May I be your ransom, "You have always said not to make this child cry; yet ordered me not to let any one enter your room, so when he (i.e. Husain) came I decided to let him do as he wished." The Prophet (ṣ) did not say anything to her and went out to his companions overwhelmed with grief, and said to them, "My people will kill this child, pointing at Husain.",Then Abubakr and Umar stood up and said, "O Prophet of Allah, while they are still believers?" He said, "Yes, and this is the soil of his *Turbat*."

On the authority of Anas Ibn Harith: The Prophet (ṣ) said: "Verily this son of mine, pointing at Husain (ʿa), will be killed in a land called Karbala. Whoever among you witnesses that should help him". Therefore, when Husain went out to Karbala, Anas went with him and was martyred in front of Imam Husain (ʿa).[1]

Another tradition with further details, on the authority of Umme Salama: "Both Hasan and Husain (ʿa) were playing while the Prophet (ṣ) was in my house, when Jibrail (ʿa) descended and said: "O Muhammad! Surely, your community would kill this son of yours after you - while pointing at Husain (ʿa)". The Prophet (ṣ) wept and hugged him. There was in his hand the soil of his *turbat* which he repeatedly smelled. He started reciting; "Woe to you *'Karb wa bala'* (tragedy and disaster)." Then he gave it to Umme Salama and said to her: "Whenever this soil changes into blood then know that my son is killed." Umme Salama kept it inside a glass bottle, and everyday after Imam Husain left Medina, she would look at it and say: Verily, the day when you turn into blood would be a terrible day."

The Prophet (ṣ) saw in a dream that a spotted dog was licking his blood; he interpreted it thus: a leucodermic would kill his son Husain.

1- Tarikh ibn Wardi Vol.1 P.173 to 174.

The dream proved to be true when the wretched Shimr Ibn Zil Jaushan, who was a leucodermic, killed Imam Husain (ʿa).

These are some of the many traditions which relate the fact that the Prophet (ṣ) had informed the people of the martyrdom of his grandson, Imam Husain (ʿa); and from them, one can sense the extent of the Prophet's (ṣ) grief over this painful tragedy.

Imam Husain *(ʿa)* with his father

Imam Husain (ʿa) was greatly loved by his father. His love for him and his brother Hasan reached such an extent that during the battle of Siffin he did not allow them to fight so that the Prophet's (s) lineage would not be cut through their death. He nurtured them both with his divine gifts and noble character, instilled them with good manners and wisdom so much so that they became a carbon copy of him.

Imam Husain (ʿa) was like his father in his courage and determination. He preferred martyrdom to paying allegiance to Bani Umayyah. He had made up his mind concerning life and had accepted death to protect his honour.

Imam 'Ali informed (people) of Imam Husain's martyrdom

Imam 'Ali, Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa) informed the people about his son, *Abul Ahrar* (Master of all advocates of freedom).

There are many traditions narrated from him and here are some of them:

On the authority of Abdullah Ibn Yahya who narrated from his father, Yahya, that he was with Imam 'Ali (ʿa) in the battle of Siffin as the flag-bearer of his army. When they reached *Nainawa*, Imam 'Ali (ʿa) raised his voice saying: 'I admonish you to be patient, O Aba Abdullah on the bank of the *Furaat*.' Yahya stood up and said, 'What is wrong with Aba Abdullah?' He said: 'One day I went to the Prophet (ṣ) and I saw him shedding tears so I said to him: 'O Prophet of God (ṣ) has any one annoyed you? Why are you shedding tears?' He said, "Jibrail has just informed me that Husain (ʿa) will be killed on the bank of the *Furaat*, and then he said, do you want me to fetch the *turbat* (earth) where he would be killed for you so that you may smell it?" I said, 'Yes,' and then

he took a handful (of the soil) and gave it to me, so I could not control my tears."[1]

On the authority of Harith Ibn Salim: 'We fought the battle of Siffin with 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. When we reached Karbala, he led us in prayer. After the prayer, he took a handful of the soil and began to smell it and then said, "Woe to you, oh soil! Indeed, they will be raised from you on the day they would enter paradise without reckoning. Harith was perplexed on hearing these words of Imam 'Ali (ʿa). They continued to echo in his mind and at the same time worry him, so when he returned to his home town he discussed it with his wife Jurda bint Samir, who was a *Shiite* of Imam 'Ali (ʿa). He informed her of what he had heard from the Imam. She immediately said, 'Oh man! Verily Amirul Mu'minin will never say anything except what is true. Many years later, Ibn Ziyad sent his army to fight the grandsonof the Prophet (ṣ), Imam Husain (ʿa). Among the army was Harith. When they arrived at Karbala he remembered the saying of Amirul Mu'minin (ṣ), so he disliked fighting his son, Husain (ʿa). He went to Imam Husain (ʿa) and informed him of what he had heard from his father. Imam Husain asked him, "Are you with us or against us?" He said, "I am neither with you nor against you. I have left my family and my son and I entertain fear for them from Ibn Ziyad." Imam Husain (ʿa) advised him: "Turn away and flee so that you do not see our fight. I swear by Him in whose hand is the life of Muhammad (ṣ), any man who witnesses our fight today and does not help us, Allah (swt) will cast him into Hell fire. Harith went away and did not witness the Imam's (ʿa) fight.[2]

On the authority of Thabit Ibn Sawid who narrates from Gaflatu: 'Ali (ʿa) addressed the people when a man close to his pulpit stood up and said: 'O Amirul Mu'minin, I passed by *Wadi-ul-Qura* and found Khalid Ibn Urfa dead, so pray for forgiveness for him". He (ʿa) said: By God, he has not died and will not die until he leads an army

1- Tārikh Ibn Asākir (hand written) 13:57 – 58, Mu'jam Kabir of Tabarani narrated it in his biography of Imam Husain (as) 3:105 – 106.
2- Hayatu Imam Husain (as) 1:426.

and the flag bearer of its banner is Habib Ibn Himār..." A man stood up and raised his voice saying, "O Commander of the faithful! I am Habib Ibn Himār and I am among your Shiites. Imam 'Ali (ʿa) asked him, "Are you (really) Habib Ibn Himār?" He said, "Yes, of course!" Imam 'Ali (ʿa) repeated his question and Habib confirmed his identity. Then Amirul Momineen (ʿa) said, "Yes, by God, you are the one carrying it and you will certainly carry it and will certainly enter with it through this gate!" Then he pointed to the gate of *Fil* (elephant) in the mosque of Kufa."

Thabit remarks, "By Allah, I did not die until I saw Ibn Ziyad send Umar Ibn Sa'd to fight Imam Husain (ʿa) while he made Khalid Ibn Urtrufa the leader of the army and Habib Ibn Himār its standard or flag bearer, and I saw him entering (the mosque of Kufa) with it through the gate of *Fil*."[1]

Imam Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa) said to Barātu 'Āzib, "O Barātu, Would Husain be killed while you are living and do not help?" Barātu said, "That is not possible, O commander of the faithful!" When Imam Husain (ʿa) was killed Barātu remembered the saying of Imam 'Ali (ʿa). Then he was filled with regret and used to say: "It was indeed a great tragedy. I wish that I did not witness it. How I wish I was killed for his sake."[2]

Traditions in which Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa) had announced the martyrdom of the Prophet's Grandson on the land of Karbala were many and we have mentioned most of them in our book *Hayatu Imam Husain (ʿa)* (life of Imam Husain (ʿa).

His personality

The unique characteristics of the *Father of all freedom loving people* that are an essential part of him and his struggle are as follows:

1. His strong determination

Among the innate characters of "*Abi Shuhadah*" (Father of Martyrs) was his strong determination, sound judgment and resolution. He had

1- Sharh Nahjul Balagha (Ibn Abi Hadid).
2- Al-Isāba 1:187, Hayatu Imam Husain (as) Imam Husain (as) 1:429.

inherited these from his grandfather, the messenger of Allah (ṣ) who changed the course of history and gave it a new life and understanding. He stood firmly in the face of strong super powers that did all they could to stop him from pronouncing the words of God, for he did not care about their power and position.

Similarly, his grandson Husain (ʿa) faced the (despotic) Umayyads. He openly declared his refusal to pay the oath of allegiance to Yazid and moved into the battlefield with his few helpers, thus, upholding the word of truth and destroying the word of falsehood. The Umayyad government employed its mighty forces against him to squash his revolt but failed to deter him. His famous declaration says it all:

"Indeed I do not see death except as a fortune, and I see life with the oppressors as humiliation."

Then he went out with his noble household and companions to the battle of honour to raise the banner of Islam and effect a great victory for the Islamic community until he was martyred. May Allah's peace be upon him! He was the strongest of men in terms of determination, for he faced incredible ruthlessness and brutality without being deterred. His strength of character shocks the intellect and confuses the understanding.

2. His rejection of injustice

One of the most outstanding qualities of Imam Husain (ʿa) was his rejection of injustice which gave him the title of *Abiyya Diyam* (one who rejects injustice). He represented the best model for this noble trait. He raised the slogan of human honour and showed the way to live a noble life. Refusing to surrender before the Bani Umayyad dictators, he preferred to die with honour.

Abdul Azeez ibn Nabatatu As-Sa'ady in this regard has said:

"Husain saw that death with honour is life

And, living in humiliation, death"

The famous historian Ya'qubi says: Imam Husain (ʿa) is the embodiment of an esteemed and greatly honoured person.[1]

Ibn Abi Hadid said: "The leader of those who reject falsehood, teach men self-defence and how to die under the shadow of swords, in preference to humiliation in this world, is Abu Abdullah. Husain ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (ʿa) and his companions were offered security if they surrendered, but he rejected that as pure humiliation. Ibn Ziyad felt disgraced, so he chose to kill him."

I heard Naqibu Aba Yazid Yahya ibn Zaid Al-Alawi saying:

My father's poem written exclusively in the honour of Husain (ʿa) says.[2]

The leader of "Ahrar" taught men

How to refute the tyrant

And the greatness of self-sacrifice[3]

Mus'ab ibn Zubair wrote:

"He (decided) to choose death with honour

In preference to a life of humiliation."

Indeed in his speech on the day of *Ashura* at Karbala, he had carefully selected words that had a great impact in depicting this greatness, resistance and self-reliance. He said:

"Lo! The bastard, son of a bastard has set up two things: death and humiliation. We are far from being humiliated. Allah (swt), His Prophet (ṣ) and the true believers reject both …"

On the day of *Ashura*, he stood firmly like a mountain without being moved by that beastly and inhuman treatment meted out by the Umayyad soldiers. He delivered to all generations the best lessons with regard to nobility, honour, dignity and the significance of resistance when he declared:

1- Tarikh Ya'qubi vol.2 P.293.
2- Sharh Nahjul Balagha by Ibn Abi Hadid Vol.3 P.249.
3- Tarikh Tabari Vol.6 P.273.

"By Allah, I will never give you my hand like a man who has been humiliated; nor will I flee like the fleeing of slaves (instead), **"I seek refuge from my Lord and Your Lord..."**

The poets of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) have depicted his noble character in many couplets which have been recorded and recited by them and form the best and most valuable sources of Arabian literature.

Sayyid Haidar Al-Hilli, in most of his immortal elegies, writes: Imam Husain (ʿa) squarely tackled what the Umayyad government intended to do to him by forcing him to submit to their tyranny, oppression and dictatorship. Allah the Most High forbids it, so Imam Husain (ʿa) rejected it. He never surrendered before anyone except God. How could he submit to an insignificant creature, a wretched member of the Bani Umayya?

3. His bravery

Mankind has not witnessed a person braver than Imam Husain (ʿa) throughout the pages of human history. Indeed he stood firmly on the day of his martyrdom with the kind of persistence which baffled great men and heroes. His stance could not be comprehended by many people because of its greatness. Generations up to the present find it difficult to fully comprehend the greatness of his persistence. Some people are of the view that his valour was even more than that of his father whose bravery was well-known to the whole world.

His enemies, who were cowards, were afraid of him, for he was not ever deterred by their large number. The more difficult his trial, the more firmly he stood. After living through the ruthless killing of the members of his household and companions, together with the lack of water for three days he faced the enemy bravely-alone. They, all of them –without exception– attacked him together; their numbers according to the narrators amounted to thirty thousand soldiers, all so afraid of him that they would not get close to him and behaved like herds of sheep. As expressed by narrators:

"The strength of his steadfastness exposed their cowardice. He stood firm like a mountain receiving rains of arrows from all sides. Unmoved, he fought them as if nothing abnormal was happening to him."

Sayyid Haidar has this to say:

Alone, he confronted a large group of soldiers

Whereas, each member of the group was afraid of him

Each and every man of his household and his companions fought with great courage, vying with one another to go forward to die for the sake of Allah with incredible sincerity and enthusiasm, not an atom of fear in their hearts. Their enemies bore witness to this heroic display of love for Allah (swt).

The Imam ('a) had invited his companions to die for the sake of Allah as if he was inviting them to a dining table full of delicious meals. It was indeed delicious to him because he was effacing falsehood while witnessing the proofs of his Lord which were the basis of his belief.

4. His straightforwardness

Among the attributes of the master of the freedom fighters was the clarity in his speech and simplicity of his manner. Through out his life he had never deceived or cheated any one and only trod on a clear path, which was in conformity with his open, fair mind, far removed from all tendencies that did not agree with his religion or his noble character. One example of his illuminating behaviour was when Walid the governor of Medina called him in the middle of the night and informed him that Mu'awiya had died, and demanded his oath of allegiance for Yazid.

He ('a) refused outright and clearly told him the truth, declaring:

"Oh Amīr (Governor), I am from the Prophet's household, the source of divine message. With us Allah opened His Message and with us He sealed it, while Yazid is a *fasiq* (one disobedient to God) and *fajir* (morally corrupt) person, a drunkard, murderer of innocent life, one who blatantly commits sins and indecent acts. *Someone like me can not pay the oath of allegiance to somebody like him.*"

These words clearly reveal his straightforwardness, his grand personality and his strength to oppose falsehood and uphold the cause of truth.

Another example of such candidness was revealed when he set out for Iraq. The tragic news of the disgraceful attitude of the people of Kufa toward his messenger, Muslim ibn Aqil and his murder reached him, upon which he said to those of his followers who were after power and not the truth: "Our Shi'as have disappointed us, so whoever among you wishes to withdraw can do so without any blame on him."

Thus, those who were desirous of this world, among his followers, deserted him, and there remained with him only his intimate friends together with members of his household.[1]

Such was the Imam even at that critical moment in which helpers were seriously needed he (ʿa) never concealed the truth from anyone, because it is unbecoming of a great soul like him, who believed in his Lord and truthfulness of his mission, to do so.

Another example of his candidness was when he gathered all the members of his household and his companions on the night of the 10th day of Muharram, and informed them that he would surely be killed the following day and that all those who were with him would be killed, too. He made it clear to them so that they would be aware of what would happen to them. He then put out the candle and commanded them to desert him in the darkness of the night, but not one person left; that great honourable household refused to part from him, and insisted that they preferred to be martyred with him.

Nations change, possessions perish, but a noble and grand character becomes immortal because it represents the highest values without which man is worthless.

5. Steadfastness in the cause of truth

As for steadfastness in the cause of truth, it was one of the most outstanding qualities of his personality. It was this quality by virtue of which he had established the truth, demolished the fortress of falsehood, and destroyed the beehive of tyranny and oppression.

Imam Husain (ʿa) saw that the Islamic nation had been immersed in (the ocean of) falsehood and misguidance and there was no true

1- Inshabul Ashraf, (Noble Descent) 240:1.

understanding of Islam, nor could anything be achieved from it, therefore, he rose to the battlefield to redeem Islam and raise the banner of truth by sacrificing himself. He had announced his goal in a sermon delivered to his companions, saying: **"Don't you see that the truth is not being practiced and falsehood is not prohibited? A believer should long to meet Allah (in this type of situation)…"**

Indeed, truthfulness was an essential quality of Imam Husain which, without doubt, the Prophet (ṣ) had planted in his noble character. According to what historians say, he (ʿa) had been suckled on the noble tongue that pronounced Allah's words and began to flow with justice and truth all over the earth.

6. Patience

He had faced the trial of losing his grandfather and mother when he was a mere child. He witnessed the intimidation of his father and the sufferings he bore because of the wicked plots that were contrived against him. He also watched (helplessly) his brother Imam Hasan's (ʿa) disappointment and the deception of his soldiers towards him until he was forced to sign a peace treaty (with Mu'awiya). He remained with his brother during this bitter experience which ended with Mu'awiya poisoning him through his wife Judaa.

He wanted to bury the body of his brother by the side of his grandfather (ṣ) but Bani Umayya prevented him from doing so and that was a pill that was the most difficult to swallow. He bore all the tragedies with immeasurable patience.

The worst tragedy he endured was seeing the fundamental principles of Islam fading away, many fabricated, *ahadith* being ascribed to his grandfather, and the consequent change being wrought in the laws established by Allah.

Besides the above he used to hear his father being abused from the pulpits and the despotic Ziyad oppressing and terrorizing their Shi'as. He patiently tolerated all these disasters, misfortunes and calamities.

These tragedies and difficult trials peaked on the 10th day of Muharram. He stood patiently before his children and other members of his family after he had been struck with many spears and arrows.

Addressing them, he said: "Patience, O members of my household, patience. O sons of my uncles, you will never be humiliated after this day."

He comforted his sister *Aqilatu Bani Hashim* (The Intelligent lady of Bani Hashim) i.e., Zainab (ʿa). She became speechless because of the calamities that lay before her. Imam Husain (ʿa), seeing her in that condition, hurried to her and advised her to adhere to patience, and accept whatever Allah had destined for them with pleasure.

He had patiently endured his little children, infants and women crying for water to quench their unbearable thirst, while he could not help them. All he could do was persuade them to be patient and steadfast ensuring a glorious condition after these grievous trials.

He was patient while confronting the enemy alone, who were great in number, receiving deadly blows from all directions by all kinds of weapons, his scorching thirst dehydrating him, but he tolerated all these with patience. His patience and steadfastness on the day of *Taff (Ashura)* was unprecedented in the history of mankind. Concerning this, Al-Irbaly has said: "Husain's bravery has become an adage which people quote and his tolerance finds no equal in earlier and later generations."[1]

Anyone afflicted with any one of these trials would break down no matter how patient or how determined. He would eventually surrender due to the weakness of his soul, but Imam Husain (ʿa) suffered all those calamities in order to achieve a noble goal, for which his exalted soul had submitted itself and never succumbed in the face of any trial.

Historians write: "Surely he was unique in this (noble) trait. Events or crises never weakened his determination no matter how hard they were. Once his son died during his lifetime and there was no impact of that seen in him. When he was asked concerning that, he said; "We members of the Ahlul-Bayt do request Allah and He grants us our

1- Kashful Ghamma 2:229.

request, so whenever He gives us what is contrary to our wish we also accept it with pleasure."[1]

Indeed, he had accepted the will of Allah and willingly submitted to His commandment, and this is the essence of Islam and the peak of faith.

7. Forbearance

All narrators of prophetic traditions unanimously report that he did not avenge evil done to him and did not punish a sinner for his sin but instead, gave them gifts and was kind to them. His case was like that of his grandfather, the Apostle of God (ṣ) who extended his hand to all (mankind). He was known for this trait. Some of his servants took advantage of this. They used to offend him deliberately so that they could earn his favour and bounty in turn.

Historians reported that once one of his servants committed an offence that demanded disciplinary measures. He (ʿa) ordered that he (i.e. servant) should be disciplined. The servant cried out; O my master! Allah Almighty says (in the holy Qur'an): ***"…And those who suppress their anger."***

The Imam (ʿa) smiled and said, "Leave him alone, I have suppressed my anger." The servant quickly added, "*And those who pardon people.*" The Imam said, "I have pardoned you."

The servant seeking for favour added: **"And Allah loves those who do good acts."** He said, "You are free for the sake of Allah."

Then he ordered that enough wealth be given to him which should fulfill his present and future needs.

This great nobility of character was an essential part of him which he adhered to strictly throughout his life.

8. His humbleness

Imam Husain (ʿa) was born with a natural humbleness and aversion for selfishness and arrogance. He had inherited this quality from his

1- Al-Isabatu 2:222.

grandfather, the Prophet (ṣ). Narrators have reported many incidents concerning his humbleness which we will, hereby mention.

It is reported that once he passed by some poor people who were eating on the *Sufa* (rock shelf). They invited him. He alighted fom his camel and ate with them. Then he said to them, "I have responded to your call so you should also respond to mine (invitation)." They answered his call and he then took them to his house. On reaching his house, he said to his wife Rubab "Please bring all your savings." She brought all that was with her, and he gave it all to them.[1]

2. He (ʿa) passed by some poor people eating some crust of bread which they got as "Sadaqa" (alms-giving). He greeted them with the Salam, so they invited him to their food. He sat down with them, but said, "I would have eaten it with you people if it had not been Sadaqa." Then he invited them to his house, offered them food, clothed them and ordered some darahim for them.[2]

He (ʿa) used to mix up with the poor people and sit with them wherever they were and show great kindness to them so that the poor would not feel ashamed of their poverty and the rich would not be proud of their riches.

His preaching and guidance

Imam Husain (ʿa) greatly cared about guiding the people towards the right just as his father did before him with the sole aim of developing the spirit of virtuousness in their souls, and directing them towards truth and purity; to distance them from evil tendencies like transgression, self delusion, and confusion, etc. Here are some of his quotations:

"O son of Adam, ponder carefully: Where are the world's kings and its masters; they developed, cultivated, dug and planted its trees and extended its cities. However, they parted from it, although they hated to do so. Then other people inherited it, and soon shall we join them."

1- Tarikh ibn Asakir Vol.13 P.54.
2- Aayan Shi'a Vol.4 P.110.

"O son of Adam, think about your death, your resting place in your grave and your standing before Allah (swt). When your bodily joints will bear witness against you, the day the feet will be unsteady and hearts will reach the throat. Some faces will be bright while other faces will be dark, secrets will be exposed and the scale of justice will be set."

"O son of Adam, remember the death of your fathers and your sons; how they were and where they lived, similarly you would soon be like them and would become a lesson for those who take lessons." Then he recited the following poem:

Where are the kings who were heedless of protecting it (i.e. the world)?

Were they not made to drink from the cup of death?

Those cities in the open horizon

Are ruined and the builders are dead

We gather our wealth for those who would inherit us

And build our houses to be destroyed by time.[1]

Such was the admonition and advice received from him; it aimed at rectifying the soul, disciplining it and distancing it from whims and evil tendencies.

His short speeches

God Almighty had really blessed Imam Husain ('a) with the highest form of wisdom and eloquence. Some of his short wise sayings are mentioned below:

1. "Be careful about what you seek apology for, for indeed a believer does not commit an evil act so he does not apologise, but as for the hypocrite, he commits evil acts every day and keeps on apologising…"[2]

1- Al-Irshad (Addailamy) 1:28.
2- Tuhaful Uqul P.246.

2. "A sensible person does not discuss with someone he fears might deny him; and he does not ask from someone he fears might turn him down; and he does not trust someone he fears might betray him and he does not place hope in someone he is not sure of …."[1]

3. "Whoever is deprived of five things is indeed deprived of much good, (i.e.) delightful mental power, religion, discipline, bashfulness and good ethics..."[2]

4. "A miser is one who is niggardly in greeting with *Salām*…"[3]

5. *"To die with honour is better than live in humiliation."*[4]

6. He (ʿa) said to someone who was backbiting before another man – "O man! Stop backbiting for it is the soup of the dogs of Hell-fire…"[5]

Imam Husain *(ʿa)* with Umar

Imam Husain (ʿa), while still a child, felt grieved by Umar ibn Khatab occupying his father's position. When Umar was delivering a sermon from the pulpit, he was unaware of the presence of Imam Husain (ʿa) who suddenly climbed up the pulpit shouting at him, "Step down, step down from my father's pulpit, go to your father's pulpit!" Umar was dumbfounded and perplexed over the correctness of the child's speech, so he began to testify to his utterance by saying: "You are right, my father never owned a pulpit." He then sat him by his side and began to ask him from who he had learnt (these words)? Imam Husain (ʿa) replied: "By God no one has taught me".

Great feelings, intelligence and the innate wisdom of Imam Husain (ʿa) made him voice these utterances even though he was still a child. He saw that it was not proper for any one to climb his grandfather's pulpit except his father who was the pioneering wisdom and the gateway to the city of the Prophet's (ṣ) knowledge.

1- Rayhatu Rasul: 55.
2- Rayhatu Rasul: 55.
3- Rayhanatu Rasul: 55.
4- Tuhful Uqul: 246.
5- Tuhaful Uqul: 246.

Imam Husain *('a)* with Mu'awiya

The Islamic *Ummah* fell a prey to the canine teeth of Mu'awiya and became submissive to his tyrannical and oppressive rule which ensured hatred and ill-will for Islamic values and fundamental principles. Mu'awiya was bent on removing all what Islam had brought in terms of good training, moral ethics and politics. He embarked on the following policies:

1 – Autocracy and oppression: All religious conscious figures like Hijr Ibn Adi, Maitham Tammār, Rashid Al-Hijri, Amr Ibn Al-Hamq, Al-Khuraiy and others like them were brutally massacred because they represented the opposing force and threat to his rule and openly condemned his politicies which were based on oppression and dictatorship.

2 – Degradation of the position of Ahlul-Bayt ('a), the pivot of social awareness in Islam: Mu'awiya made it obligatory upon the Muslims to insult them. He made hating them an essential part of Islam. He made use of every possible device like training, teaching, preaching and bribing to defame the grand position of the Ahlul-Bayt ('a). He also made it compulsory upon the leaders of Friday prayers to insult them from the pulpits as an obligatory part of the Friday sermons, the two annual 'Id festivals and on other similar occasions.

3 – Changing Islamic truths and facts: He embarked upon changing all the true teachings of Islam, its interpretation, understanding and context. He set up social committees to forge and fabricate unfounded traditions which were then ascribed to the Holy Prophet (ṣ). These committees forged many lies that were incompatible with reasoning and the normal traditional ways of life. Unfortunately and regrettably enough these formidable lies were compiled into the so-called *Sihah* (i.e. authentic traditions) and other books. This forced some devoted Muslim scholars to write books that exposed some of those fabrications. In some accounts, the plots of this terrorist have been described as the worst of all calamities that the Muslims suffered. Unfortunately, however, many Muslims continue to hold fast to those false traditions as an essential part of their religion while in reality religion has nothing to do with them.

Imam Husain's admonition to Mu'awiya

Imam Husain (ʿa) wrote a serious note to Mu'awiya in which he strongly condemned his wicked politicies that completely contradicted the book of Allah the Most High, and the traditions of His Prophet (ṣ). The worst policy that encompassed all Mu'awiya's crimes and mortal sins was his killing great and prominent Islamic notables.

We have mentioned this in our book – *Hayātu Imam Husain (ʿa)* (i.e. life of Imam Husain (ʿa)).

A political gathering in Mecca

Imam Husain (ʿa) held a public political conference in Mecca in which he invited all classes of people who participated in that year's Hajj, from among the *Muhājirun*, the *Anṣāriyyun* and others. He addressed them and revealed the oppression that the household of the Prophet (ṣ) had suffered from the dictatorial regime of Mu'awiya.

This is an excerpt from his sermon: "Verily this *Ṭāgiya* (transgressor) i.e. Mu'awiya – has inflicted on us and our Shiites what you have already seen and witnessed. I would like to ask you some questions; if what I say is right confirm it, and deny it if it is untrue. Listen and write what I say, and when you return to your different tribes (towns and countries), whoever you trust and are sure of his faith, tell him what you know of our rights, for I know that he will not be misguided after learning the truth about us. **"Allah will perfect His light even if the disbelievers hate it."**

Then he ended the sermon by mentioning the merits of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) and Mu'awiya's effort to conceal them. This was the first conference that ever took place in Islam.

His (absolute) condemnation of Yazid's nomination to the post of Caliphate

Mu'awiya tried hard to impose his son Yazid on the Muslims. He exhausted all means and power to reinstate kingship permanently among his descendants.

Imam Husain (ʿa) was the foremost of those who opposed, unreservedly criticized and condemned this announcement. This was

because Yazid did not, in any way possess any quality that could qualify him as the caliph of the Muslims. Imam Husain (ʿa) described him thus: "He is an alcoholic, who hunts for fun and pleasureable distractions, he obeys Satan and disobeys Allah. He openly commits indecency, completely ignores Allah's legal punishments and monopolizes everything. He has legalized Allah's prohibitions and prohibited what Allah has made lawful."[1]

Mu'awiya tried his best to convince Imam Husain (ʿa) to pay the oath of allegiance to his son but remained unsuccessful.

Death of Mu'awiya

When the tyrant Mu'awiya died, the governor of Medina i.e. Walid, invited Imam Husain (ʿa) to his palace to take his oath of allegiance for Yazid. Imam Husain (ʿa) refused and replied: "O ye governor, we are the household of the Prophet of Allah (ṣ), the source of the Messenger-ship, the frequenting place of Angels. With us Allah opens and with us Allah closes the message, while Yazid is a sinner, one who drinks wine, takes innocent lives, commits indecency openly. Somebody like me does not pay the oath of allegiance to somebody like him."[2] Thus, Imam Husain (ʿa) and all members of the household of the Prophet (ṣ) refused to pay allegiance to Yazid following the decision of their leader Imam Husain (ʿa).

Imam Husain's revolution

Imam Husain (ʿa) declared his resolve to restore the honour and prestige of the Muslims to them and safeguard them from the tyrants and their oppression. Imam Husain (ʿa) had publicly declared his noble goals, saying, "I have not opposed out of arrogance, nor have I come to oppress or create disorder; I have come out only to reform my grandfather's *Ummah* and I intend to promote good and prevent evil among their ranks. I intend to tread the course of my grandfather and my father…"

1- Tarikh Ibn Athir 2: 553.
2- Hayātu Imam Husain (as) 2:255 quoted from Al-Futuh 5:18.

Imam Husain (ʿa) commenced his resolution to transform nations, achieve social justice for all, and end the intimidation of the entire Islamic nation by the Umayyad regime.

When Imam Husain (ʿa) decided to depart from Hijaz for Iraq he ordered the people to gather, so a large gathering assembled in the holy House of Allah, *Baitul-Ḥarām*. He delivered a historical sermon to them. Here is an excerpt:

"All praise belongs to Allah, and what Allah wishes; there is no power except with God. Allah's Benediction and Peace be upon His Apostle. Death has been ordained, written upon the son of Ādam just like the place of wearing a necklace is the neck of a young lady…".

It contains the Imam's eagerness for martyrdom and disgust for this earthly life. He welcomed death and regarded it an adornment for man like the necklace which adorns a lady's neck. He (ʿa) announced that the place where his blood would be shed was between Nawawis and Karbala.

We have analysed the important points of this sermon in our book *Hayatu Imam Husain (ʿa)*. Readers may refer to it for details.

Imam Husain (ʿa) departed for Iraq at dawn. He mounted his horse and travelled until he arrived at Karbala. He and his caravan were stopped there where he gave his life in order to revive his grandfather's religion which the wicked Umayyad family and their allies were striving hard to efface.

Martyrdom

Tragedies and calamities struck Imam Husain (ʿa) as soon as he reached Karbala. Whenever he overcame one great misfortune a greater trial befell him. The Imam (ʿa) suffered trials that no reformer had suffered before. Among them are the following:

1. He saw that the (divine) message and the essence of revelation had been corrupted and the household of the holy Prophet (ṣ) was being targeted by the cruel, soulless army of Yazid. The Imam (ʿa) was ready to shed his blood to defend Islam, and, inspite of the sense of insecurity rising as the caravan of Imam Husain (ʿa) was surrounded by thousands of soldiers, he advised his companions and family

members to show patience and not do anything that would tarnish their prestige.

2. The crying of the children increased because of their unbearable thirst, and there was no way he could help them.

3. After killing his companions and members of his household, the criminal atrocities went further, killing the innocent children of his brother and sister.

4. Sheikh Tustari has said concerning his thirst: "Verily, Imam Husain's (ʿa) thirst had affected four parts of his body, his lips dried up, his heart was exhausted because of the lack of water, his tongue was injured because of too much chewing on it in want of water, and lastly, his eyes were darkened because of the serious thirst."[1]

5. Loss of the beloved ones of his household and his companions made him look at their tents, while on the battlefield, and seeing them empty his grief would intensify and then he would mourn for them.

Safiyu-Deen said concerning this tragedy: "Imam Husain (ʿa) suffered such trials and calamities that no Muslim can hear them without his heart being rendered into pieces."[2]

Imam Husain *(ʿa)* seeking assistance

Imam Husain (ʿa) glanced sorrowfully at his family and companions. He had seen them slaughtered like sacrificial lambs on the land of Karbala in the scorching heat of the sun while the loud wailing of the women could be heard. After all had been killed, he made a call for assistance to defend the sanctity of the holy Prophet (ṣ), saying, "Is there anyone who would defend the sanctity of the Prophet of Allah (ṣ)? Is there any Muslim who believes in the oneness of Allah and fears Allah concerning us? Is there any one who hopes for Allah's reward in assisting us?[3]

1- Khasaisil Husain: 60.
2- Hayatu Imam Husain vol.3 P.374.
3- Duraru Afkar (Abul Fath ibn Sadaqa): 38.

This cry for help did not have any effect on those sinful hearts that had just shed the blood of seventy two loyal believers. At this point, Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa), hearing his father seeking for help stood up from his bed, sick and weak and began to wobble with his staff towards the battlefield. Then Imam Husain (ʿa) saw him and shouted to his sister Sayyida Ummi Kulthum: "Hold him back so that the earth is not deprived of the lineage of the Prophet's (ṣ) family." She hurried towards him and made him return to his bed".

The killing of a six-month infant

The most tragic and worst of all the calamities that befell him was that of (the killing) of his six-month old son Abdullah. He took him to show the enemy so that they might see and offer him a drop of water to drink, but it did not soften the hearts of those criminals. The brutal and accursed Hurmala Ibn Kamil quickly stood up and shot an arrow at him, then he laughed a despicable laughter saying proudly: "Take this and make him drink of it (as water)". The arrow pierced the neck of the child, who began to flap his hands clinging to his father's chest like a slaughtered bird. Then he raised his face towards heaven and died in his father's arms. Indeed, it was an evil scene capable of splitting the heart into pieces …. Imam Husain (ʿa) raised his hands full of that pure blood and threw it up to the (Heaven) and no drop of it fell back to the ground according to the saying of Imam Bāqir (ʿa). Then he began to pray fervently to his Lord saying, "*That which I have been afflicted with has been little because it is all in the presence of Allah the Most High. O Allah, let it not be less important to you than the camel of Salih. My Lord, if you have withheld victory from us give it to one who is better than us so that he will avenge our murder, and make that which has befallen us in this world a stored treasure in the Hereafter. O Allah, bear Witness that these people just killed the person most resembling your Apostle Muhammad (ṣ).*"

Resistance of Imam Husain *(ʿa)*

Imam Husain (ʿa) then faced the enemy alone. He stood firmly watching his children, family and disciples being martyred. It did not in anyway weaken him. Indeed it was like the steadfastness of the Prophets, the great ones among the Prophets, whom Allah (swt) distinguished from the rest of His servants.

His son, Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) narrated some very incredible scenes of his steadfastness, saying; "Whenever the situation became intense for him, his face shone and his body relaxed. Some of the enemy soldiers remarked: "Look at him, he is not afraid of death at all."[1]

Abdullah Ibn Ammar said: "I saw Husain (ʿa), whenever they gathered round him, attack those on his right side until they dispersed. By Allah, I have never seen a person whose children and companions have all been killed yet remain as strong as ever. By God, I have never seen somebody like him before him and after him."[2]

Then he attacked the enemies of Allah, and began to fight them, the toughest and hardest battle people have ever seen. He attacked a group reciting the following lines:

I am Husain son of 'Ali (ʿa)

I have sworn not retreat

I will defend my father's family

I am fighting to revive the religion of the Prophet(ṣ).

Yes of course, you are Husain, you symbolize nobility and honour, and you are unique in the world. You trod on the path of the religion of your grandfather, the Prophet (ṣ). You have indeed been sent as a reformer for this religion, for if it were not because of you it would have been like a ghost with no shadow of its real existence….

It is reported from Ibn Hijr that while Imam Husain (ʿa) was fighting he was reciting the following lines:

- I am the son of 'Ali Al-Hurr from the family of Hashim

- This suffices as a pride when I am proud

- My grandfather is the Messenger of Allah, the best of mankind.

- We are the lamps of Allah that shine among the people

- Faṭima is my mother from the lineage of Ahmad

1- Khasā'is Husainiyya (Tustari): 39.
2- Tarikh ibn Kathir Vol.7 P.188.

- My uncle is called Ja'far the possessor of two wings

- In us the book of Allah was truly revealed

- In us is the guidance and revelation

(And about us) all virtuous things are mentioned.[1]

Offering farewell to his family

Imam Husain (ʿa) returned to his family in order to bid farewell to them for the last time. With blood oozing out of his wounds, he put on the battle cloth and prepared for the final trial. He ordered the members of his household to be patient and submit to the decree of Allah, saying: "*Be ready for calamity. Know that Allah the Most High is your protector and your guard, He will soon save you from the evil of the enemy and make good the end of your affairs. He will then punish your enemies with different kinds of punishments and give you in-exchange different kinds of favours and honour, so do not complain or say something with your tongues that could reduce your position with God.*"

No soul can bear all these trials and calamities and at the same time face them squarely with unflinching calmness and self-possession and be pleased to surrender to Allah's Will. Verily, there is no one except Husain, (ʿa) the Prophet's (ṣ) hope, fragrance and perfect image.

Imam Kāshiful Ghitta writes, "He drew close to the tents of the daughters of Imam ʿAli and Zahra (ʿa). They gathered round him while he was soaked in blood. Indeed, bidding farewell to his family was among his worst trials.

The Prophet's (ṣ) daughters wept and mourned for their grandfather, the messenger of Allah (ṣ) and they clung to him in order to bid farewell to him. Then Umar Ibn Sa'ad urged his armed forces to attack Imam Husain (ʿa), saying, "Attack him (now) that he is busy with his family. By God, if he should come out you would never have the upper hand over him again." The wicked men attacked the tents of Imam

1- As-Sawa'qul Muhraqa: 117 to 118, Jawahiratu Kalam fi madihil saadatul a'alaam: 119.

Husain(ʿa) by shooting arrows whereby the ropes of the tents were destroyed. Some of the arrows struck the women's clothes so they entered their tents. Then Imam Husain (ʿa) came out like a fierce lion full of fury at this evil act. He immediately began to strike off the heads of the wicked men with his sword. Then they rained arrows at him from his right and left. An arrow struck his pure mouth. He pulled it out and put his hand under the wound. He addressed Allah: "O Allah, this is very little (an insignificant sacrifice) for your sake."

2. An arrow struck his noble forehead that was shot at him by Abu Al-Hatuf. He (ʿa) removed it while his noble blood oozed out. He raised his hands and prayed to God saying; "O Allah see my condition and that which is imposed on me by your disobedient servants. O Allah, seize them one by one and kill them and leave not one of them on the surface of the earth. Do not ever forgive them." Then he shouted at the army saying; "O ye community of evil men, indeed evil is that which you have done to the progeny of Muhammad (ṣ) after him. Know that you will never kill any man after me and feel proud of having killed him. That will certainly not be easy for you after you have killed me. I pray that Allah will honour me with martyrdom and I pray He will avenge my blood from where you do not expect."[1]

Allah accepted the prayers of the Imam (ʿa) because He avenged his blood soon after their terrible acts. Calamities and trials befell them. Mukhtar pursued them, brought them out and dealt with them one after the other. Some of them escaped to various parts of the region while the soldiers of Mukhtar fetched them out, until a majority of them were put to the sword.

Zuhri says; "No one remained among those who killed Imam Husain (ʿa), without being afflicted with murder, or blindness or a darkened face, or that he lost his power within a short time."[2]

3. Historians say that Imam Husain (ʿa) stopped to rest after he had lost a lot of blood that weakened him. Suddenly a spear struck his forehead which caused blood to flow down his face. He took a piece

1- Maqtal Husain (Al-Muqarram): 339.
2- Uyunul Akhbal (ibn Qatiba) Vol.1 P.102 to 104.

of cloth to clean off the blood from his eyes when a three forked sharp spear struck his chest. He felt sure that the end was at hand. He turned his face towards heaven and said, "*In the name of Allah, by Allah and upon the way of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ)… My Lord, verily Thou knowest they are killing the son of the Prophet (ṣ) through his daughter, like whom there is no one over the surface of the earth now.*"

He pulled out an arrow from his body that made him bleed seriously and tried to stop it with his hand, but when his hand was filled up with blood he threw it up to the heavens and said to himself: "*Don't worry about whatever befalls you, God is aware of all that is happening.*"

The Imam (ʿa) rubbed the blood on his face and beard and said: "*This is how I will be when I meet (my Lord) Allah (swt) and my grandfather the Apostle of Allah (ṣ), painted with blood.....*"[1]

Arrows pierced the whole of his body. The loss of blood made him weak while intense thirst exhausted him so he sat down on the ground. While in that state Malik Ibn Nasir attacked him. He struck him with his sword and the protective cap [2] on his head became full of blood. The Imam drew towards him and prayed: "*May you never eat or drink with your right hand again; May Allah raise you with the wrong doers.*" Then he threw away the helmet which the wrong doer rushed and picked up immediately. Later, his hands became paralyzed.[3]

His secret supplications to God

Imam Husain (ʿa), in those last moments of his life turned towards Allah and prayed humbly to Him. He said: "*I am patient over whatever you have decreed for me. There is no God except Thee, O Helper of those who seek help. I have no Lord except Thee and there is no object of worship save Thee. I am patient over Thy judgment, O Helper of one who has no Helper, O Everlasting one who has no end,*

1- Maqtal Al-Khawarizimi Vol.2 P.34.
2- A kind of cap people wore during the early days of Islam.
3- Asbabul Ashraaf Vol.3 P.203.

O He who revives the dead, O He who guards every soul, judge between me and them, for You are the best of those who Judge."[1]

He had adhered to God and was patient over His decrees and had surrendered to Him. His deep faith in God made him forget all that had afflicted him.

The attack on him *('a)*

The criminals then launched an attack on him from all sides! They multiplied their strikes with their swords and spears while Zira Ibn Sharik At-Tamimy struck him on his left palm. Sinan Ibn Anas struck him on his shoulder. He struck him several times with the sword and spear and was very proud of that. He related the story of what he had done to Hajaj with pride, "I struck him with spears and I mangled him with the sword, a real mangling."[2] The wicked Hajaj retorted loudly: "But you will never be together in the Hereafter."[3]

Some historians write that no one had ever been attacked in Islam the way Imam Husain ('a) was attacked. About one hundred and twenty injuries and cuts found on his body were the result of swords, spears and arrows.[4]

Imam Husain ('a) remained silent for sometime prostrating on the earth. They all ran away and withdrew from him; no one was bold enough to approach him to inflict more injury on him.

Sayyid Haidari has this to say:

No war ever saw one resting on the ground

Making his heroes cowards

His dignity and reverence shook the heart of the enemies so much that some of them said, *"The beauty of his face and the radiance of his magnificence prevented us from killing him."*

1- Maqtal Husain (Muqarram): 345.
2- Al-Hadaiq Al-Wardiyya 1:126.
3- Majmau Zawaid.
4- Al-Hadaiqu Wardiyya 1:126.

Each time any one approached him, he went back because he hated to be held responsible for killing him (ʿa)[1].

Zainab (ʿa) the granddaughter of the Prophet (ṣ) came out of her tent terrified, and began to wail for her brother: "Oh how I wish the heaven should fall over the earth for this (brutal crime)". Then Umar Ibn Sa'd drew closer, so she shouted at him, saying: "O Umar! Are you pleased to see Abu Abdullah being killed while you are looking at him?" The notorious man turned his face away from her while tears rolled down his accursed beard. Zainab (ʿa) never had the courage to take a second look at her brother in that very terrible state, so she retreated into her tent to take care of the children and other women who were all frightened and scared.

Then the accursed Athim Ibn Anas pulled out his sword to strike Imam Husain (ʿa) so that he would not lose the prize his leader, Ibn Marjana, had promised each and every one of them. He then cut the Imam's (ʿa) head, smiling (showing his pleasure and delight as a sign of victory that he had ever achieved).

Imam Husain (ʿa) indeed offered God the greatest sacrifice, Allah the Most High says: **"Surely, Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their property in return for the Garden they shall have; they fight in the cause of Allah and they slay and they are slain – a promise that He has made incumbent on Himself in the Taurat, and the Gospel, and the Qur'ān. And who is more faithful to his promise than Allah? Rejoice then, in your bargain which you have made with Him; and that is which is the supreme triumph"[2].**

No one among the true martyrs has achieved the honour, nobility and eternal esteem of Imam Husain (ʿa). We can see how the whole world today is frenzied with his remembrance. We can see how his holy shrine has become the most revered and honoured shrine over the surface of the earth.

Indeed, Imam Husain (ʿa) has raised the banner of Islam to a very high position by offering his blood and the blood of the martyrs from

1- Ansabu shrāf 3:203.
2- Suratu *Tauba*: 111.

his household and his disciples which is shining in the centre of this universe and showing the way to the people of the whole world to gain their freedom and dignity.

IMAM ‘ALI IBN UL HUSAIN ZAINUL ABIDIN (ʿA)

He was a glorious Imam, a great reformer of Islam and an ardent supporter of his grandfather’s tradition. He was like Prophet Isa Jesus (ʿa) in piety and worship, like Prophet Ayyub (ʿa) in terms of patience in the face of trials. His face shone with prophetic light emitting signs of inherited guardianship.

Ash-Shaikhani Al-Qadiri affirmed: “One is never satiated by looking at him[1] for his face always radiates light, his conduct reflecting that of his father, the grandson of the Prophet of Allah (ṣ). As-Saffah Muslim ibn Uqbah, the criminal, who used to underrate all human values was amazed by his awesome personality. When he saw Imam Sajjad (ʿa) he started trembling and greeted him with full honour, surprising the people around him who remarked: “Verily, ‘Ali Zainul Abidin (ʿa) is a manifestation of all prophets.”

His titles

All his noble titles depict his noble soul, character and inherent morality, besides his great worship of Allah (swt). Some of those titles are as follows:

***Zainul Abidin* (Adornment of the worshippers)**

This title was given to him by his grandfather, the Prophet of Allah *(ṣ)* because of his immense worship.[2] This title has become his name because of its wide-spread acknowledgement (among people). No body ever achieved this kind of title except him *(ʿa)*. Indeed, he was the adornment of all worshippers and pride of all sincere and obedient servants of Allah (swt).

1- As-Sirat Sawi fi Manaqib Aalin Nabi (saw), P.192.

2- Tahzib At-Tahzib, Vol.7 P.306; Shazarat Zahab, Vol.1 P.104. in this book affirmed that “He was named Zainul Abidin due to his immense worship.”

***Sayyidus Sajidin* (Leader of prostrators)**

Another famous title was ***Sayyidus Sajidin***.[1] This was because he was seen in prostration by everyone. He was a person who used to prostrate a lot. Describing his father's prostration, Imam Muhammad Al-Bāqir said: "Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husain would prostrate instantly whenever he remembered any favour of Allah (swt), whenever Allah saved him from any evil or mishap, and whenever he read any verse from the Book of Allah (swt) which contained a verse of prostration, including the recommended ones..

After performing the obligatory prayers, he used to prostrate (as a sign of thankfulness). Therefore, he was nick-named As-Sajjad."[2]

***Zuth-Thafanat* (one with protruded joints)**

He was granted this title because all the prostration parts of his body protruded like a camel's knee.[3] Imam Baqir ('a) said: "The prostration parts of my father developed protrusions. He used to cut off five pieces twice a year, therefore, he was given the title of *Zuth-Thafanat*."[4]

It is mentioned in a narration that he used to collect those parts in a sack which he willed to be buried with him.

***Az-Zaki* (The Pure)**

He was given the title of *Az-Zaki* because Allah (swt) had purified him from all kinds of filth and indecency, as He had purified his ancestors.

1- 'Ilal Ash-Shara'i P.88.
2- *Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*, Vol.4, P.977; *'Ilal Ash-Shara'i'*, P.88.
3- Subhul A'ashi Vol.1 P.52, Biharul Ansab 25th sheet, Tuhafu Raghib P.13.
4- 'Ilal Ash-Shara'i', P.88; Bihar Al-Anwar, Vol.46, P.6; Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a, Vol.4, P. 977.

Al-Amin (The Trustworthy)

Another title of his was Al-Amin.[1] He was a typical example of a trustworthy person. He once said on an occasion; "If the killer of my father had entrusted me with the sword with which he killed my father, I would give it back to him (whenever he demanded it), because it was a trust".

Ibn Al-Khairatain (Son of two goods)

Another title of his was Ibn Al-Khairatain. He himself said, "I am a son of the two goods (Ibn Al-Khairatain)." His utterance was a reference to the Prophetic saying which says Allah (swt) has two best men from among His servants, (i.e.) Hashim from the Arabs and Farisi from the non-Arabs, and Imam Zainul Abidin is from the two.[2]

His personal character

Allah (swt) did not create a virtue or any merit a man could possess which was not an essential part of Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) and nobody shared the same level of that quality with him. His personal character possessed noble manners and great religious consciousness forcing whoever reads his life history to recognize his eminence.

Sa'id ibn Musayib, one of the prominent scholars of Medina commented: "I have never seen someone who is more prominent than 'Ali ibn al Husain (ʿa). There was never a time when I saw him and did not hate my self…."[3]

At this junction, we will explain some of his personal qualities of character.

Endurance (*Al-Hilm*)

Endurance is one of the virtues possessed by all Prophets of Allah (swt) because it is used to suppress one's anger.

1- *Al-Fusul Al-Muhimmah*, Ibn As-Sabbagh, P.187; *Bahr Al-Ansab*, pages-25; *Nur Al-Absar*, P.137.
2- *Al-Kamil*, Al-Mubarrad, Vol.1, P.222; *Wafayat Al-A'yan*, Vol.2, P.429.
3- *Tarikhul-Ya'qubi*, Vol.3, P.46.

According to Al-Jahiz, "Endurance means pardoning when anger is at its peak though one has the power to avenge."[1]

All narrators of the prophetic traditions and historians have mentioned many examples of his endurance. Some are mentioned here:

Once Imam 'Ali Zainul Abidin ('a) owned a slave woman. She used to pour water over his hand whenever he wanted to perform ablution for prayer. One day, the water container fell on his hand and hurt him. She immediately said, "Verily Allah (swt) decrees: "*And those who suppress their anger*."

The Imam ('a) replied: "I have suppressed my anger."

She knew the Imam's endurance and nobility so she added, "*And those who forgive human beings*."

The Imam ('a) said softly: "May Allah forgive you…"

Then she said, "*And Allah loves those who do kindness.*" The Imam ('a) said: "You are free for the sake of Allah."

Once a wicked slave greeted Imam Zainul Abidin ('a) insultingly without any reason. He turned his face towards him and said politely, "Young man! There is greater trouble waiting for us. If I am able to solve the problem I will not heed to what you have said. Verily, I am confused and cannot go forward. Indeed, I am worse than what you have said…"[2]

The entire soul of Imam Zainul Abidin ('a) was focused towards Allah and the awfulness of the Hereafter from which nobody will be safe except the faithful ones. No abuses or slams from any immoral or uncivilized person ever hurt him.

1- *Tahzibul-Aklaq*, P.19.
2- *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol.46, P.96.

Patience (*As-Sabr*)

Patience was one of Imam Zainul Abidin’s (ʿa) qualities which helped him face all disasters and adversity. No person during his time experienced the hardships and trials that befell him.

Still a child, his beloved mother died. In early youth he lost his grandfather, Imam ‘Ali Amirul Mu’minin (ʿa) after which he witnessed the imposed peace treaty that his uncle Imam Hasan (ʿa) was compelled to sign with the tyrant Mu’awiya ibn Abi Sufyan. When Mu’awiya succeeded to the throne, he gradually began to demolish and wipe out Islam from the map of existence. He also took harsh measures against the members of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa). He compelled people to condemn them from the pulpits of the mosques. In addition to that, he mercilessly carried out brutal massacres of their followers, especially those who were the symbols of religion and the source of political awareness in the Islamic states.

On reaching maturity, he lost his uncle, Imam Hasan (ʿa) who was poisoned by Judaa at the behest of Mu’awiya. This tragedy deeply affected the heart of Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) and all the members of their family.

The greatest disaster that occurred in his life was watching naked swords chopping off the heads of the members of the prophetic household in Karbala, brutal slaughtering unprecedented in the history of mankind. After this the tyrant of Kufa made him prisoner. They burnt his tent and the tents of the women folk, dragged him insultingly. Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) patiently tolerated all this and surrendered his affairs to Allah (swt).

After that he was brought before Yazid, the son of Mu’awiya. He confronted all those painful moments with complete submission to Allah’s Will. How great a spirit and what a heart he possessed! As for his soul, he had surrendered it to the Creator of the universe, and the Giver of life. He faced all these disasters and emerged stronger than ever.

He once affirmed that patience and forbearance were the cornerstones of adherence to Allah.[1] An exmple of his patience was when he heard a scream from inside his house while he was sitting with his companions. He stood up to see what had happened. His family informed him that one of his sons had passed away. After recieving this news, he returned to his companions and informed them about what had happened. His companions were all amazed at his unequavocal patience. He said to them: "We are a family who adhere to Allah over what we like and praise Him over what we dislike."[2] He repeated several times: "Patience is a great treasure while complaining is a sign of weakness."[3]

The great serenity with which he bore all the painful tragedies made him the most rare character found throughout human history.

His charitable nature

Historians affirm that Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) never saw anyone in debt without paying off all his debts for him.[4] He once said, "Indeed my enemies do come to me for the fulfillment of their needs. I usually hasten to fulfill their need so that someone else should not precede me, fearing that my enemies might become self-sufficient and make me lose its reward."[5]

The following story illustrates his affection and love for other people:

Az-Zuhri narrates: "One day, I was with ʻAli ibn al Husain (ʿa). One of his companions came and voiced his problem, saying, "I am under a debt of four hundred dinars and I cannot pay it, while I have a family that I must feed." At that time, the Imam (ʿa) himself did not have any money to pay the debt of his companion. Actually weeping, he declared, "What disaster and calamity is greater than this for a free

1- *Al-Imam Zainul Abidin*, Al-Muqarram, P.19.
2- *Hilyah Al-Awliya'*, Vol.3, P.138.
3- *Ad-Durr An-Nazhim*, P.173.
4- *Al-Imam Zaid*, Abu Zuhra, P.34.
5- *Nasikh At-Tawarikh*, Vol.1, P.13.

believer to see his brother in debt but not be able to pay it for him, or see him in poverty and not be able to free him from that poverty?"[1]

Generosity

Generosity was one of the innate qualities of Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa). All historians unanimously agree that he was the most generous of men during his time, especially towards the poor. Many examples regarding his generosity, have been quoted:

Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) paid Muhammad ibn Usamah a visit. As soon as he sat down, Muhammad ibn Usamah began to cry loudly. Imam Zainul Abidin inquired: "What makes you cry?"

Muhammad bn Usamah replied: "I am in debt."

He asked him again, "How much?"

Muhammad ibn Usamah replied: "Fifteen thousand dināar."

Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) did not stand up from that position until he had given him the money[2], thus relieving him of the burden and distress of debt.

Distribution of Food among people

A regular feature of his lifestyle was that he fed the people of Medina in his house everyday at noontime.[3]

His care for a hundred houses

Among his generosity was that he used to take care of a hundred houses in Medina secretly,[4] considering every house sheltered a group of people.[5] Verily, this shows his largeheartedness and overwhelming affection for other people, and this in reality demonstrated his gratitude to Allah (swt) for His bounties.

1- *Amali As-Saduq*, P.453.
2- Bidayyatu wan Nihayatu 9:105, Sira A'alamu Nablaa 4:239, Tarikhul Islam 2: 266, Haliyya 3:131.
3- *Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi*, Vol.3, P.6.
4- *Tahzib Al-Lugha wa Al-Asma*, P.343.
5- *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol.46, P.88.

His sympathy for the poor

Some examples of his tenderness towards the poor, the needy and distressed, are as follows:

Respect for the poor

He always cared for and respected the poor. Respecting the poor people ensures social affection and tenderness and must be spread among its members or individuals.

Tenderness towards the poor

He was very kind and sympathetic towards the poor and the needy; it used to please him a lot to serve meals to orphans, the poor, the insolvent and the *Zimmi* (non-Muslims living in the Islamic state), the needy, and those who had no means of livelihood. He used to serve them with his own hand.[1] He carried food and firewood on his back to deliver it at their doorstep.[2] Part of his kindness and tenderness for the poor was that he disliked harvesting his dates at night, because the poor people would not be present at that time to receive something of it, hence they would be deprived of it.

Once Imam ʻAli Zainul Abidin (ʻa) said to a man who had cut some branches of date-palm trees for him at night, "Do not do that (again). Don't you know that the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) has prohibited harvesting at night?" He used to say: "The bunch you give to someone who asks is his right on the day of harvest."[3] (as mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān).

Banning the refusal to give something to those who beg

Imam Zainul Abidin (ʻa) prohibited the refusal to give alms to those who beg, and deprive them of livelihood, because this action can cause bad consequences like disasters and taking away of grace. Sa'id ibn Musayyib narrates an incident: "One day, I slept in ʻAli ibn al Husain's house. After performing the dawn prayer, he saw a beggar

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1- *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol.46, P.62.
2- *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol.46, P.62 and narration like this in *Dairatul Mārif* (Al-Bustani), Vol.9, hal.355.
3- *Wasail Ash-Shi'a*, Vol.6, P.138.

standing in the front of his house. He ordered, "Give him whatever he needs and do not deprive him."[1]

Imam Zainul Abidin ('a) repeatedly stressed this matter in many traditions narrated from him.

Refusing a request from a poor man can destroy the grace of Allah and incur His wrath. There are many *Mutawatir* traditions narrated from the infallible Imams ('a) concerning this matter. Those who wish that the favours given to them by Allah should be everlasting should not refuse to give to the beggars nor prevent the poor and the needy from getting the wealth that is in their possession.

Alms giving

Acts repeatedly carried out by Imam 'Ali Zainul Abidin ('a) during his lifetime were giving alms to the poor in order to provide for their livelihood and save them from poverty. He always encouraged people to give alms and donations, because these have unlimited rewards. He once said, "No one gives alms to any poor and weak person except that his prayer is answered at that very particular moment."[2] At this junction, we will narrate some areas of his donations:

1. Donation of his clothes

He used to wear nice clothes. In winter, he used to wear silky clothes and when summer came he would either gift those clothes or sell them and give the money as alms. In summer, he used to wear two types of Egyptian cloth and give both of them as alms during the winter.[3] He used to say: "I feel shy before my Lord that I eat from the price of the clothes which I have worn to worship Him."[4]

2. Donation of his beloved properties

Imam Zainul Abidin ('a) always used to give out of his wealth and property, what he loved most, as alms. Narrators of traditions have mentioned that he was always giving alms of almond, fruit and sugar.

1- *Al-Kafi*, Vol.4, P.15.
2- *Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*, Vol.6, P.296.
3- *Tarikh Dimasyq*, Vol.36, P.161.
4- *Nasikh At-Tawarikh*, Vol.1, P.67.

When he was asked for the reason behind that, he recited the Quranic verse which says: ***"By no means shall you attain to righteousnesss until you spend out of what you love..."*** (Family of Imran verse 92)[1]

Historians mention that Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) was very fond of grapes. One day, he was fasting and when it was time for breaking the fast, his slave served him with a bunch of grapes. Suddenly a beggar came. The Imam (ʿa) said that the grapes should be given to the beggar. His slave ordered someone to buy another bunch of grapes which he served to the Imam (ʿa). Suddenly another beggar knocked at the door. He commanded that the grapes should be given to the beggar. The slave sent someone to buy grapes again and served them to the Imam, but a third beggar came and knocked at the door. He gave the grapes to the beggar.[2] In this episode, Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) followed the example of his ancestors for they gave their meal to the poor, the orphan and the prisoner for three days consecutively at the time of breaking their fast. Because of this, Allah (swt) revealed the chapter of the Holy Qur'ān *Ad-Dahr* concerning them and since then this chapter has become an everlasting symbol of their high rank until Allah and His servants inherit this world.

3. Distribution of his wealth

Imam ʿAli Zainul Abidin (ʿa) used to divide his wealth into two equal parts. He would retain one part of it and give out the other half to the poor.[3] He followed the example of his uncle Imam Hasan (ʿa) in this matter. Imam Hasan (ʿa) used to divide his wealth into two or three parts, and after taking one part he would distribute the other two parts to the needy persons.

4. His secret alms giving

Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) distributed alms secretly. He wanted to strengthen his relationship with the poor purely for the sake of the

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1- *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol.46, P.89.
2- *Al-Mahasin*, Al-Barqi, P.547; *Furuʿ Kafi*, Vol.6 P.350.
3- *Khulasa Tahzib Al-Kamal*, P.231; *Al-Hilya*, Vol.3 P.140; *Jamharatul Awliya'*, Vol.2 P.71; *Al-Bidayatu wa An-Nihaya*, Vol.9 P.105; *Ath-Thabaqat*, Ibn Saʿd, Vol.5 P.19.

love of Allah. He used to encourage people to do so. Once he was quoted as saying, “Giving alms secretly extinguishes Allah’s Wrath.”[1]

He used to go out after midnight, using the darkness to hide his identity and cover his face while giving alms to the poor people. People became accustomed to receiving such visits at night, so they used to stand in the front of their houses waiting for his arrival. Whenever they saw him coming, they would feel very happy and say, “The bearer of the sack has come.”[2]

Imam ‘Ali Zainul Abidin (ʿa) had a kinsman whom he used to meet every night and give him some dināŗs. One day that man said, “‘Ali Ibn al Husain has never visited me.” He implored that Allah should afflict him with a calamity. When the Imam (ʿa) died, his kinsman never received alms (at night) again. Finally, he realized that the strange man who always used to visit him at night was Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa). This man visited his shrine and cried bitterly and also asked him for forgiveness.”[3]

Ibn 'Aisha said, “I have often heard the people of Medina say: “The secret alms we used to receive at night never stopped until ‘Ali ibn al Husain passed away.”[4]

Historians narrate that some people who were living in Medina did not know who was supplying them with their livelihood, but when ‘Ali ibn al Husain died, they lost what they used to receive at night.[5]

He (ʿa) was adamant in hiding his identity. Whenever he gave out alms, he used to cover his face so that he might not be recognized.[6]

Aẓ-Ẓahabi said, “He (ʿa) was keenly involved in giving out secretly.”[7]

1- *Tazkirah Al-Huffāzh*, Vol.1, P.75; *Akhbar Ad-Duwal*, P.110; *NiHayatu-Arab fi Funun Al-Adab*, Vol.21, P.326.
2- *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol.46, P.89.
3- Ibid., P.100.
4- *Sifatu As-Safwa*, Vol.2, P.54; *Al-Ithaf bi Hubb Al-Ashraf*, P.49.
5- *Al-Aghani*, Vol.15, P.326.
6- *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol.46, P.62.
7- Ibid.

He (ʿa) used to put the foodstuff in a sack, then place it on his shoulder. The sack left a mark on his shoulder because of the frequent carrying of weight. Al-Ya'qubi narrates that when Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) was bathed (after his death) there was a mark of injury on his shoulder (protruded injury) like the skin of a camel's knee. When his family was questioned about it, they replied, "That trace was due to the fact that he was always carrying foodstuff on his shoulder at night to distribute to the poor."[1]

His worship was not blind imitation. He neither worshipped Him because of the love of paradise nor fear of hell. He worshipped Him purely because He deserved to be worshipped. This is in line with the manner of his grandfather Imam 'Ali Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa), the leader of all gnostics and leader of the pious ones whose worship for Allah was the worship of a free man.

He (ʿa) once described his reason for worshipping Allah, thus, "I don't worship Allah only for the purpose of reward. In that case, I would not be different from a greedy slave. I do not worship Him because of fear of His punishment. In that case I would not be different from a wicked slave." Some companions who were sitting there asked, "On what basis then, do you worship Him?"

He replied, "I worship Him because He deserves to be worshipped, especially because of His grace upon us."[2]

He once talked about the various reasons for worshiping Allah, saying, "There are some people who worship Allah because of fear and this kind of worship is the worship of slaves. There are some people who worship Allah because they need something from Him and this kind of worship is the worship of businessmen. However, there are some people who worship Allah to express their gratitude to Him, and this worship is the worship of a free man."[3]

1- *Tarikhul-Ya'qubi*, Vol.3 P.45.
2- *Tafsir Al-'Askari*, P.132.
3- *Sifatu As-Safwa*, Vol.2 P.53; *Shazarat Az-Zahab*, Vol.1 P.105; *Al-Hiliya*, Vol.3, P.134; *Al-Bidayatu wa An-Nihaya*, Vol.9 P.105; *Durar Al-Abkar*, 70th sheet.

Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) has stressed this in another tradition. He said, "A free man will not worship Allah except to express gratitude to Him and not because of fear or desire."[1]

All narrators say: "At all times, he was busy worshipping Allah and seeking His nearness."

His slave was once asked about his worship. Instead of answering, he asked, "Should I tell you in detail or in brief?"

The man said, "Briefly."

His slave said, "I never served him a meal during the day time and I never spread a carpet for him to sleep at night."[2]

Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) lived throughout his life fasting during the day time and worshiping at night. Sometimes he would be busy praying and at other times he would be busy distributing alms secretly to the needy.

One thing is for sure. In the history of ascetic people a man like Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa), so deep in sincerity and adherence to Allah (swt) cannot be found.

His bravery

He was the bravest man of his time, most composed and most calm. He was the son of Imam Husain (ʿa), the bravest of the descendants of Adam (ʿa). His unequivocal bravery, valour and determination was seen when the brutal Ubaidullah Ibn Marjana took him as captive. The wicked man confronted him with malicious words. The Imam (ʿa) responded with words that were truthful and thus, unbearable for the tyrant, more painful than the strike of a sword or whip, while the Imam (ʿa) was not intimidated by his apparent might and authority. Furious, he commanded that the Imam (ʿa) should be killed, upon which he was neither frightened nor moved. With complete tranquility and confidence he (ʿa) said to him: ***"We are***

1- *Al-Kawakib Ad-Durriyah*, Vol.2 P.139.
2- *Al-Khisal*, P.488.

accustomed to being killed (innocently) and martyrdom is a gift and honour from Allah (swt) to us".

Ibn Marjana sent him as a captive to Yazid ibn Mu'awiya together with the best people of the household of the Prophet (ṣ).

Despite the fact that Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) was sick, he never wasted any opportunity to address the people gathered and acquaint them with the truth for the consumption of the Muslim nation. Yazid tried to prevent him, but the people insisted and said that he was only a young man whose speech could not carry much weight. Yazid inadvertently replied that they were not aware that he was from the household of those fed with knowledge, but the people insisted. Therefore, he was forced to allow the Imam (ʿa) to talk. Then the Imam addressed the people with a sermon which shocked the people and moved them to tears, and drowned Yazid in bewilderment, not knowing how to clear himself of the shame and disgrace he had fallen into. He angrily ordered the *Muāzin* (one who calls for prayer) to make a call for prayer in order to stop the Imam's (ʿa) speech. No one had heard a more beautiful, decisive and eloquent speech. The people of Syria realized the position of the Imam (ʿa) and the rest of his household and their relation to the Prophet of Islam (ṣ). They now realized that the notorious leading dynasty had falsely convicted the Household of the Prophet (ṣ) on the false charge of being *Khawarijis*, (rebels against the government), disobeying authority and creating chaos.

The oppressor now feared an uprising, sensing a negative reaction of the people that could lead to a revolution against him, so he hurriedly sent the Imam (ʿa) and those who were with him out of Syria back to *Yathrib* (Medina).

The Imam *(ʿa)* in Medina

When the Imam (ʿa) got settled in Medina he saw the Umayyad dynasty trying hard to annihilate Islamic laws, revive the poems of the days of Ignorance, and, turn people away from the Glorious Quran. For this reason, Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) established a seminary. The majority of students were the former slaves he (ʿa) had bought and set free. He started teaching and giving lectures in Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic ethics etc. to them. Scholars also gathered

round him, and remained attached to him. They wrote and recorded down whatever they learnt and heard from him, what he taught of the Islamic laws, the highest forms of wisdom and morals. Perhaps it is pertinent to mention here that great scholars from different cities and towns graduated from this school of Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa). We have mentioned their biographies in our book *The life of Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa)*.

Another very significant thing that cannot be overlooked while talking about his seminary are his supplications, compiled as the *Sahifa e Sajjadiyya*, which scholars sometimes call the *Zabur* of the household of Muhammad (ṣ) and sometimes the *Injil* (Gospel) of the household of Muhammad (ṣ). They regarded it as the most important book after the Qur'ān and Nahjul Balāgha. Truly, it is a book containing a complete code of Islamic life and Islamic thought. There are more than 65 commentaries made on it, and has been translated into different languages like English, French, German, etc. Western scholars have found it to be very rich in principles, ethics, moral teachings, Gnostics, rules, and a great treasure of human thoughts.

His worship

There is a consensus among Muslims that verily Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) was the best in terms of obedience to Allah Ta'alā. No one was seen like him in terms of his turning towards God and his worship. The God-fearing and pious ones, overwhelmed by his great worship, bestowed upon him the title of **Zainul-Abidīn** (the adornment of worshippers) and **Sayyid us Sājidīn** (the leader of those who prostrate).

His worship of Allah was not just imitation but emerged from pure, inner, profound faith in Allah (swt) and his ample knowledge. His worship was that of a free man. Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) stressed this point when he said, "The worship of a free man is nothing but the expression of gratitude to Allah Ta'alā; neither because of fear nor desire for something."[1]

1- Kawakibu Durriya Vol.2 P.139.

Here we will briefly discuss some of his acts of worship:

His Ablution

Ablution is a purification from sins and the first of the preliminaries for *ṣalat*. The Imam (ʿa) always remained in that state of purity. Narrators have thrown light on his profound fear of Allah during ablution: "Whenever he was about to perform ablution his colour would become pale. When asked why by the onlookers, he would reply, "Do you know before whom I am about to stand?"

His concern on this issue reached such an extent that he never allowed anyone to assist him in any act of his worship. Normally, he would make all the necessary preparations for his purification. He would fetch the water he needed for ablution before he slept. When he woke up at night he started by chewing the stick (tooth brush) and then performing the ablution and then commencing his night prayers *Ṣalatul Lail*.

His *Ṣalāt* (Prayers)

As for *ṣalat*, it is affirmed in (prophetic traditions) that it is a means by which every pious believer achieves nearness to Allah (swt). Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa), regarded it as a stairway by which his soul could ascend to Allah (swt), the Creator of the universe and the Giver of life. His body used to tremble whenever he stood up to pray. When he was asked concerning that, he said: "Do you know before whom I am about to stand and with whom I am about to converse?" Here we will discuss his attitude during prayer and his use of perfume before praying.

a. His applying perfume before prayers

Whenever the Imam (ʿa) was about to pray, he would perfume himself from a *Qārurat* (a long-necked bottle containing perfume) which he always kept in his praying place. The fragrance of musk filled the air whenever he used it.

b. His dress for prayers

Whenever Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) wanted to pray he would put on a dress made of fur, simple and not gorgeous, in order to appear humble before the Almighty Creator.

c. His submission in prayers

Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) was a picture of total submission and humility before Almighty Allah, having disengaged himself completely from all worldly connections. He was unaware of the presence of anyone around him except God. Narrations described him thus: "Whenever he stood in prayer his colour changed, his body trembled in fear of Allah … He used to stand in his prayer like a humble slave standing in front of his dignified master. He used to pray like one offering his farewell prayer, as one who would not offer any prayer after that forever."

Imam Baqir (ʿa), describing how submissive his father was in prayer, said: "Imam ʻAli Ibn al Husain (ʿa) used to stand up in prayer like the stem of a tree which nothing could shake except its upper part, which the wind could move…"[1]

His submissiveness in prayer could be seen. Whenever he prostrated he would not raise his head until he was soaked in sweat[2] or drowned in water because of weeping too much.[3]

Narrators relate from Abu Hamza Thumali, one of his prominent students, who said that he once saw the Imam (ʿa) praying. His *Rida* (outer gown) fell off from his shoulders, but he did not adjust it. Later, Abu Hamza asked him why he did not adjust it to which he replied: "Woe to you! Do you know before whom I was standing? Verily nothing is accepted from the prayer of a servant except that part which he has performed with full concentration."[4]

His utmost concentration in his prayer was such that his son once fell into a well. The incident frightened the people of Medina and there was a great uproar among them until they rescued him. The Imam (ʿa) was standing in prayer in his *Mihrāb* (praying place) and he never heard anything. When he had finished his prayers, he was

1- Wasāil Shi'a Vol.4 P.685.
2- Tahzibil Ahkām 2:286.
3- Biharu Anwar 46:108.
4- Ilali Sharā'i 88, Biharul Anwar 46:61.

informed. He said: "I did not hear anything. I was busy conversing with the Almighty."[1]

Abdul Karīm Qashiry narrates that once a fire broke out in his house while he was praying. He did not show any sign of awareness and was told about it after his prayers, on which he remarked: "The greater fire had prevented me from feeling that."[2]

His praying of one thousand rakaāt (units of prayer)

All biographers who have written about the life of Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) unanimously hold that he used to offer one thousand rakaāt (units of) prayers in a day and night; and that he had five hundred date-palm trees and used to perform two rakaāt under each tree. Due to so much prayer, protrusions like that of the camel's knee appeared on his prostration limbs. Every year some parts of these protruded limbs used to fall off and he (ʿa) used to gather them in a sack and when he died it was buried with him.

His compensation for the missed recommended prayers *Nawafil*

Throughout his life, no single supererogatory missed him. At night, he used to make up for all the missed *Nawafil* prayers during the daytime. He used to advise his children to this effect saying: "Oh my dear children, though this is not obligatory upon you but I wish that whoever makes a good act his habit, should observe it consistently."[3]

His lengthy prostrations

It is affirmed in many traditions that the servant of Allah is closer to his Lord when in the position of prostration. Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) prostrated exclusively for the sake of Allah (swt). In addition, narrators mention that he once went out into the desert to humble himself before Almighty Allah. His servant went after him and found him prostrating on a rough stone. His servant reported how long he

1- Akhbāru Daul: 11.
2- Ṣifātu Ṣafwa: 2:52.
3- Ṣifātu Ṣafwa Vol.2 P.53.

had prostrated and repeated the following statement one thousand times:

لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ حَقًّا حَقًّا، لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ تَعَبُّدًا وَ رِقًّا، لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ إِيْمَانًا وَ صِدْقًا (Indeed, there is no god except Allah;

Submissively and as a slave, I declare that there is no god except Allah;

Faithfully and truthfully I declare that there is no god except Allah).[1]

He also used to make a prostration of thankfulness and express in it the following statement one hundred times:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ شُكْرًا (All praise belongs to Allah, we are grateful to Him) and after that he would say:

يَا ذَا الْمَنِّ الَّذِيْ لاَ يَنْقَطِعُ أَبَدًا، وَلاَ يُحْصِيْهِ غَيْرُهُ عَدَدًا،

وَ يَا ذَا الْمَعْرُوْفِ الَّذِيْ لاَ يَنْفَدُ أَبَدًا، يَا كَرِيْمُ يَا كَرِيْمُ

His glorification of God

He was always busy remembering Allah (swt), glorifying Him and praising Him, especially in the following words:

"سُبْحَانَ مَنْ أَشْرَقَ نُوْرُهُ كُلَّ ظُلْمَةٍ، سُبْحَانَ مَنْ قَدَّرَ بِقُدْرَتِهِ كُلَّ قُدْرَةٍ،

سُبْحَانَ مَنِ احْتَجَبَ عَنِ الْعِبَادِ بِطَرَائِقِ نُفُوْسِهِمْ، فَلاَ شَيْءَ يَحْجُبُهُ،

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ"[2]

His strict observance of the night prayer

Among the *Nawafila* (recommended prayers) that the Imam (ʿa) never neglected throughout his life was the night prayer. He adhered strictly to it both while travelling and when not on a journey.[3]

1- Wasāil Shi'a Vol.4 P.981.
2- Da'wātu Quṭbul Rawandi P.34.
3- Ṣifātu Ṣafwa Vol.2 P.53.

His supplication after the night prayer

After performing the night prayers, Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) used to recite the following supplications:

اَللّٰهُمَّ يَا ذَا الْمُلْكِ الْمُتَأَبِّدِ بِالْخُلُوْدِ،

O Allah, O possessor of an everlasting Kingdom,

الْمُمْتَنِعِ بِغَيْرِ جُنُوْدٍ وَلاَ أَعْوَانٍ، وَ السُّلْطَانِ،

Authority invincible without armies or helpers,

وَ الْعِزِّ الْبَاقِيْ عَلَى مَرِّ الدُّهُوْرِ وَ خَوَالِي الْأَعْوَامِ وَ مَوَاضِي الْأَزْمَانِ وَ الْأَيَّامِ،

Might abiding through past years that have gone by, times and days that have elapsed

عَزَّ سُلْطَانُكَ عِزًّا لاَ حَدَّ لَهُ بِأَوَّلِيَّةٍ، وَلاَ مُنْتَهَى لَهُ بِآخِرِيَّةٍ،

Thy authority is mighty that knows no limits either in its first stage or in its later stage!

وَ اسْتَعْلَى مُلْكُكَ عُلُوًّا، سَقَطَتْ الْأَشْيَاءُ دُوْنَ بُلُوْغِ أَمَدِهِ،

Thy kingdom towers high with a towering before which all things fall down without reaching their term;

وَلاَ يَبْلُغُ أَدْنَى مَا اسْتَأْثَرْتَ بِهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ أَقْصَى نَعْتِ النَّاعِتِيْنَ.

The least of which Thou hast kept to thyself is not reached by the furthest description of the describers!

ضَلَّتْ فِيْكَ الصِّفَاتُ، وَ تَفَسَّخَتْ دُوْنَكَ النُّعُوْتُ،

Attributes go astray in Thee; descriptions fall apart below Thee,

وَ حَارَتْ فِيْ كِبْرِيَائِكَ لَطَائِفُ الْأَوْهَامِ،

The subtlest of imaginations are bewildered by Thy magnificence!

كَذَلِكَ أَنْتَ اللهُ الْأَوَّلُ فِي أَوَّلِيَّتِكَ،

Therefore, Thou art Allah, the first in Thy firstness,

وَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ أَنْتَ دَائِمٌ لاَ تَزُوْلُ،

Therefore, Thou art everlasting. Thou dost not pass away

وَ أَنَا الْعَبْدُ الضَّعِيْفُ عَمَلاً الْجَسِيْمُ أَمَلاً،

However, I am the slave, feeble in works, immense in hopes

خَرَجَتْ مِنْ يَدَيَّ أَسْبَابُ الْوَصَلاَتِ إلاَّ مَا وَصَلَهُ رَحْمَتُكَ،

The tying links are outside my hand, except what is tied by Thy mercy;

وَ تَقَطَّعَتْ عَنِّيْ عِصَمُ الْآمَالِ إلاَّ مَا أَنَا مُعْتَصِمٌ بِهِ مِنْ عَفْوِكَ،

The bonds of hopes are cut away from me. Except the pardon which I hold fast to

قَلَّ عِنْدِيْ مَا أَعْتَدُّ بِهِ مِنْ طَاعَتِكَ، وَ كَثُرَ عَلَيَّ مَا أَبُوْءُ بِهِ مِنْ مَعْصِيَتِكَ،

Little on my part is the obedience toward Thee upon which I count, and great against me the disobedience toward Thee to which I have reverted,

وَلَنْ يَضِيْقَ عَلَيْكَ عَفْوٌ عَنْ عَبْدِكَ وَ إنْ أَسَاءَ، فَاعْفُ عَنِّيْ....

However, pardoning Thy slave will never constrain Thee, even if he is bad, so pardon me!

This part of the supplication contains His eminence, His *Tawhīd* and His attributes. Allah is far above all in His Highness and Supremacy.

Lets now listen to another version of this great supplication:

اَللَّهُمَّ وَقَدْ أَشْرَفَ عَلَى خَفَايَا الْأَعْمَالِ عِلْمُكَ،

O Allah. Thy Knowledge watches over hidden works

وَ انْكَشَفَ كُلُّ مَسْتُوْرٍ دُوْنَ خُبْرِكَ، وَلاَ تَنْطَوِيْ عَنْكَ دَقَائِقُ الْأُمُوْرِ،

Every covered thing is exposed before Thy awareness

The intricacies of things are not concealed from Thee,

وَلاَ تَعْزُبُ عَنْكَ غُيَّابُ السَّرَائِرِ،

In addition, unseen mysteries slip not away from Thee

وَقَدِ اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيَّ عَدُوُّكَ الَّذِي اسْتَنْظَرَكَ لِغَوَايَتِيْ فَأَنْظَرْتَهُ،

Nevertheless, over me Thy enemy has gained mastery: He asked a delay from Thee to lead me astray, and Thou gavest him the delay!

وَاسْتَمْهَلَكَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ لِإِضِلاَلِيْ فَأَمْهَلْتَهُ،

He asked a respite from Thee until the Day of Doom to misguide me, and Thou gavest him the respite

فَأَوْقَعَنِيْ، وَقَدْ هَرَبْتُ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ صَغَائِرِ ذُنُوْبٍ مُوْبِقَةٍ وَ كَبَائِرِ أَعْمَالٍ مُرْدِيَةٍ،

Therefore, he threw me down, though I had fled to Thee from minor, ruinous sins and, the major sins.

حَتَّى إِذَا قَارَفْتُ مَعْصِيَتَكَ وَ اسْتَوْجَبْتُ بِسُوْءِ سَعْيِيْ سَخَطَكَ

Until, when I had yielded to disobeying Thee and merited Thy anger through my bad effort

فَتَلَ عَنِّيْ عِذَارَ عُذْرِهِ وَ تَلَقَّانِيْ بِكَلِمَةِ كُفْرِهِ وَ تَوَلَّى الْبَرَاءَةَ مِنِّي

Turned the bridle of his treachery away from me, put in me the word of showing ingratitude to Him and disowning me,

وَ أَدْبَرَ مُوَلِّيًا عَنِّيْ فَأَصْحَرَنِيْ لِغَضَبِكَ فَرِيْدًا وَ أَخْرَجَنِيْ إِلَى فِنَاءِ نَقِمَتِكَ طَرِيْدًا،

Turned his back to flee from me; he who had thrown me into the desert of Thy wrath and sent me as an outcast into the courtyard of Thy vengeance.

لاَ شَفِيْعَ يَشْفَعُ لِيْ إِلَيْكَ وَلاَ خَفِيْرَ يُؤْمِنُنِيْ عَلَيْكَ

There is no intercessor to intercede for me with Thee, no protector to make me feel secure against Thee

وَلاَ حِصْنَ يَحْجُبُنِيْ عَنْكَ وَلاَ مَلاَذَ أَلْجَأُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكَ،

There is no fortress to veil me from Thee, no shelter in which to seek asylum apart from Thee.

فَهَذَا مَقَامُ الْعَائِذِ بِكَ وَ مَحَلُّ الْمُعْتَرِفِ لَكَ،

Therefore, this is the station of him who takes refuge with Thee, the place of the confessor to Thee

فَلاَ يَضِيْقَنَّ عَنِّيْ فَضْلُكَ وَلاَ يَقْصُرَنَّ دُوْنِيْ عَفْوُكَ

Let not Thy bounty be too narrow from me, nor Thy pardon fall short of me!

وَلاَ أَكُنْ أَخْيَبَ عِبَادِكَ التَّائِبِيْنَ وَلاَ أَقْنَطَ

Let me not be the most disappointed of Thy repentant servants, nor the most despairing

وُفُوْدِكَ الْآمِلِيْنَ، وَ اغْفِرْ لِيْ إِنَّكَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِيْنَ...

Of those who came to Thee with expectations! Forgive me; surely, Thou art the best of the forgivers…

In this version Imam Zainul Abidin (‘a) expresses the weakness of the human soul while confronting lust and temptations. Imam Zainul Abidin (‘a) sought the protection of Allah (swt) against Satan, man’s wicked enemy. Let us now listen to another part of his supplications:

اَللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ أَمَرْتَنِيْ فَتَرَكْتُ، وَ نَهَيْتَنِيْ فَرَكِبْتُ،

O Allah, Thou commanded me but I did not comply,

Thou prohibited me but I committed

وَ سَوَّلَ لِيَ الْخَطَأَ خَاطِرُ السُّوْءِ فَفَرَّطْتُ،

Evil thoughts tempted me to offend, and I was negligent

وَلاَ أَسْتَشْهِدُ عَلَى صِيَامِيْ نَهَارًا، وَلاَ أَسْتَجِيْرُ بِتَهَجُّدِيْ لَيْلاً،

I cannot call upon daytime to witness my fasting, nor can I seek sanctuary in night because of my vigil

وَلاَ تُثْنِيْ عَلَيَّ بِإِحْيَائِهَا سُنَّةٌ، حَاشَى فُرُوْضِكَ الَّتِيْ مَنْ ضَيَّعَهَا هَلَكَ،

No Sunnah praises me for keeping it alive, only Thy obligations, he who neglects them perishes.

وَلَسْتُ أَتَوَسَّلُ إِلَيْكَ بِفَضْلِ نَافِلَةٍ مَعَ كَثِيْرِ

I cannot seek access to Thee through many recommendable works,

مَا أَغْفَلْتُ مِنْ وَظَائِفِ فُرُوْضِكَ،

Besides that, I have been heedless of many duties of Thy obligations,

وَتَعَدَّيْتُ عَنْ مَقَامَاتِ حُدُوْدِكَ إِلَى حُرُمَاتٍ انْتَهَكْتُهَا

In addition, I have transgressed the stations of Thy boundaries thereby violating sacred things,

وَكَبَائِرِ ذُنُوْبٍ اجْتَرَحْتُهَا، كَانَتْ عَافِيَتُكَ لِيْ مِنْ فَضَائِحِهَا سِتْرًا،

And committing great sins, though Thou hast given me safety from their disgraces which serves as a covering

وَهَذَا مَقَامُ مَن اسْتَحْيَى لِنَفْسِهِ مِنْكَ وَسَخِطَ عَلَيْهَا

Therefore, this is the station of one who is ashamed of himself before Thee; angry with himself

وَرَضِيَ عَنْكَ، فَتَلَقَّاكَ بِنَفْسٍ خَاشِعَةٍ وَرَقَبَةٍ خَاضِعَةٍ

Satisfied with Thee, he meets Thee

With a humble soul, a neck bent down,

وَظَهْرٍ مُثْقِلٍ مِنَ الْخَطَايَا، وَاقِفًا بَيْنَ الرَّغْبَةِ إِلَيْكَ وَالرَّهْبَةِ مِنْكَ

A back heavy with offenses; hesitating between longing for Thee and fear of Thee

وَأَنْتَ أَوْلَى مَنْ رَجَاهُ وَأَحَقُّ مَنْ خَشِيَهُ

Thou art the most worthy of those in whom he might hope, The most deserving for him to dread and fear

وَاتَّقَاهُ، فَأَعْطِنِيْ يَا رَبِّ مَا رَجَوْتُ وَآمِنِّيْ مَا حَذَرْتُ،

So give me O my Lord, what I hope for, make me secure against what frightens me

وَعُدْ عَلَيَّ بِعَائِدَةِ رَحْمَتِكَ، إِنَّكَ أَكْرَمُ الْمَسْؤُوْلِيْنَ

Act kindly towards me with thy kindly act of mercy! Surely, Thou art the most generous of those from whom people ask for needs.

Imam Zainul Abidin ('a) belittled all his charitable acts, sleepless nights in worship, days of fasting, performing all recommended prayers and reviving the Islamic prophetic traditions, etc., as worthless in the sight of Allah (swt). What a marvelous repentance! Which submissiveness can be compared with this submission? Indeed, the Imam ('a) was the most superior figure in piety and devotedness. Let us take a glance at another version of his supplication:

اَللَّهُمَّ وَإِذْ سَتَرْتَنِيْ بِعَفْوِكَ وَتَغَمَّدْتَنِيْ بِفَضْلِكَ

O Allah, since Thou hast covered me with Thy pardon

and shielded me with Thy bounty

فِيْ دَارِ الْفَنَاءِ بِحَضْرَةِ الْأَكْفَاءِ فَأَجِرْنِيْ مِنْ فَضِيْحَاتِ دَارِ الْبَقَاءِ عِنْدَ مَوَاقِفِ الْأَشْهَادِ

In the abode of annihilation and the presence of equals, Grant me sanctuary from the disgraces of the Abode of eternity at the standing places of the witnesses

مِنَ الْمَلاَئِكَةِ الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ وَالرُّسُلِ الْمُكَرَّمِيْنَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِيْنَ،

From among the angels of close proximity, the honoured messengers, the martyrs and the righteous

مِنْ جَارٍ كُنْتُ أُكَاتِمُهُ سَيِّئَاتِيْ وَمِنْ ذِيْ رَحِمٍ كُنْتُ أَحْتَشِمُ مِنْهُ فِيْ سَرِيْرَاتِيْ،

And before the neighbor from whom I have hidden my evil deeds and the womb (kin) relative before whom I feel ashamed in my secret thoughts!

لَمْ أَثِقْ بِهِمْ رَبِّ فِي السَّتْرِ عَلَيَّ، وَوَثِقْتُ بِكَ رَبِّ فِي الْمَغْفِرَةِ لِيْ،

I trust them not, my Lord to cover me over. But I trust Thee, my Lord to forgive me!

وَأَنْتَ أَوْلَى مَن وُثِقَ بِهِ وَأَعْطَى مَنْ رُغِبَ إِلَيْهِ وَأَرْأَفُ مَن اسْتُرْحِمَ، فَارْحَمْنِيْ

Thou art the most worthy of those in whom confidence is reposed, the most giving of those who are besought, and the most clement of those from whom mercy is sought. So have mercy upon me!

Here Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) expresses his great hope in the grace and bounty of Allah. He requests mercy and pleasure from Him on the day of Ressurection.

Let us see another version of his supplication:

اَللَّهُمَّ وَأَنْتَ حَدَرْتَنِيْ مَاءً مَهِيْنًا مِنْ صُلْبٍ مُتَضَائِقِ الْعِظَامِ حَرِجِ الْمَسَالِكِ

O Allah, Thou caused me to descend as means of water from loins of narrow bones and tight passages

إِلَى رَحِمٍ ضَيِّقَةٍ، سَتَرْتَهَا بِالْحُجُبِ،

Into a constricted womb which Thou hast covered with a veil;

تُصَرِّفُنِيْ حَالاً عَنْ حَالٍ حَتَّى انْتَهَيْتَ بِيْ إِلَى تَمَامِ الصُّوْرَةِ،

Thou turned me about from state to state until Thou tookest me to the most completed form

وَأَثْبَتَّ فِي الْجَوَارِحِ كَمَا نَعَتَّ فِي كِتَابِكَ

Fixed within me the bodily parts, as Thou hast described in Thy book

(نُطْفَةً ثُمَّ عَلَقَةً ثُمَّ مُضْغَةً ثُمَّ عِظَامًا ثُمَّ كَسَوْتَ الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْتَنِيْ خَلْقًا آخَرَ كَمَا شِئْتَ)،

(a drop, then a clot, then a tissue, then bones, then Thou garmented the bones with flesh, and then Thou produced me as another creature as Thou willed)

حَتَّى إِذَا احْتَجْتُ إِلَى رِزْقِكَ وَلَمْ أَسْتَغْنِ عَنْ غِيَاثِ فَضْلِكَ

Then, when I needed Thy provision and could not do without the aid of Thy bounty

جَعَلْتَ لِيْ قُوْتًا مِنْ فَضْلِ طَعَامٍ وَشَرَابٍ أَجْرَيْتَهُ لِأَمَتِكَ الَّتِيْ أَسْكَنْتَنِيْ جَوْفَهَا وَأَوْدَعْتَنِيْ قَرَارَ رَحِمِهَا،

Thou appointed for me a nourishment from the bounty of the food and drink which Thou bestowed upon Thy handmaid in whose belly Thou gavest me to rest and the womb Thou deposited me in

وَلَوْ تَكِلُنِيْ يَا رَبِّ فِيْ تِلْكَ الْحَالاَتِ إِلَى حَوْلِي أَوْ تَضْطَرُّنِيْ إِلَى قُوَّتِيْ لَكَانَ الْحَوْلُ عَنِّيْ مُعْتَزِلاً،

Hadn't Thou entrusted me in those states, my Lord to my own force or driven me to have recourse to my own strength, force would have been removed from me

وَلَكَانَتْ الْقُوَّةُ مِنِّيْ بَعِيْدَةً، فَغَذَوْتَنِيْ بِفَضْلِكَ غِذَاءَ الْبِرِّ اللَّطِيْفِ،

And strength would be taken from me, so Thou fed me through Thy bounty with the good soft nourishment

تَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ بِيْ تَطَوُّلاً عَلَيَّ إِلَى غَايَتِيْ هَذِهِ لاَ أَعْدَمُ بِرَّكَ وَلاَ يُبْطِئُ بِيْ حُسْنُ صَنِيْعِكَ،

Thou hast done that for me in graciousness toward me up to this my present point. I do not lack Thy goodness, nor does Thy benefaction keep me waiting.

وَلاَ تَتَأَكَّدُ مَعَ ذَلِكَ ثِقَتِيْ فَأَتَفَرَّغُ لِمَا هُوَ أَحْظَى لِيْ عِنْدَكَ،

Yet with all that, my trust has not become firm enough that I might free my self for that which is more favourable to Thee

قَدْ مَلَكَ الشَّيْطَانُ عِنَانِيْ فِيْ سُوْءِ الظَّنِّ وَضَعْفِ الْيَقِيْنِ،

Satan has taken possession of my reins through my distrust and frail certainty

فَأَنَا أَشْكُوْ سُوْءَ مُجَاوَرَتِهِ لِيْ وَطَاعَةَ نَفْسِيْ لَهُ، وَاَسْتَعْصِمُكَ مِنْ مَلَكَتِهِ،

I complain of his evil neighbourhood with me and my soul's obedience toward him! I ask Thee to preserve me against his domination

وَأَتَضَرَّعُ إِلَيْكَ فِيْ صَرْفِ كَيْدِهِ عَنِّيْ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ فِيْ أَنْ تُسَهِّلَ إِلَى رِزْقِيْ سَبِيْلاً،

And I plead with Thee to turn his trickery away from me! I ask Thee to make the path to my provision easy

فَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ عَلَى ابْتِدَائِكَ بِالنِّعَمِ الْجِسَامِ وَإِلْهَامِكَ الشُّكْرَ عَلَى الْإِحْسَانِ وَالْإِنْعَامِ،

Since to Thee belongs praise for Thy beginning with immense favours and Thy inspiring gratitude for beneficence and bestowing favour,

فَصَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ، وَسَهِّلْ عَلَيَّ رِزْقِيْ، وَأَنْ تُقَنِّعَنِيْ بِتَقْدِيْرِكَ لِيْ،

So Bless Muhammad and his Household and make the way to my provision easy for me! [I ask Thee] to make me contented with Thy ordainment for me,

وَأَنْ تُرْضِيَنِيْ بِحِصَّتِيْ فِيْمَا قَسَمْتَ لِيْ، وَأَنْ تَجْعَلَ مَا ذَهَبَ مِنْ جِسْمِيْ

To take me satisfied with my lot in that which Thou hast apportioned for me and to replace what has gone of my body

وَعُمْرِيْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ طَاعَتِكَ، إِنَّكَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِيْنَ

And my lifespan into the path of Thy obedience, surely Thou art the best of providers!

This supplication of Imam Zainul Abidin was inspired by the verse of the Holy Qur'ān informing mankind of the stages of creation. This has benefited mankind greatly in the science of embryology.

Syed Qutb writes; "One must be surprised to see the explanation of the Holy Qur'ān concerning the creation of the human foetus. Taday, science has confirmed the details given in the Quran about the foetus. It has been proved (medically) that bone cells are the first to be formed in a foetus; no flesh cells are formed until the bone cells are formed. This is a reality that has been established and confirmed by the verse of the Holy Qur'ān…"[1]

Let us see the last part of his supplication:

اَللَّهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ نَارٍ تَغَلَّظْتَ بِهَا عَلَى مَنْ عَصَاكَ،

O Allah, I seek refuge in Thee from the fire through which Thou art harsh towards him who disobeys Thee

وَتَوَعَّدْتَ بِهَا مَنْ صَدَفَ عَنْ رِضَاكَ، وَمِنْ نَارٍ نُوْرُهَا ظُلْمَةٌ وَهَيِّنُهَا أَلِيْمٌ وَبَعِيْدُهَا قَرِيْبٌ،

And by which Thou hast threatened him who turns away from Thy good pleasure; and from the fire whose light is darkness and whose ease is pain and whose remoteness is proximity

1- *Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an*, Vol.17 P.16.

وَمِنْ نَارٍ يَأْكُلُ بَعْضَهَا بَعْضٌ، وَيَصُوْلُ بَعْضُهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ،

From the fire parts of which some parts devour other parts and some parts leap upon other parts

وَمِنْ نَارٍ تَذَرُ الْعِظَامَ رَمِيْمًا، وَتَسْقِيْ أَهْلَهَا حَمِيْمًا، وَمِنْ نَارٍ لاَ تُبْقِيْ عَلَى مَنْ تَضَرَّعَ إِلَيْهَا،

From the fire which leaves bones decayed and lets its people drink boiling water; from the fire which does not spare him who pleads to it,

وَلاَ تَرْحَمُ مَن اسْتَعْطَفُهَا، وَلاَ تَقْدِرُ عَلَى التَّخْفِيْفِ عَمَّنْ خَشَعَ لَهَا وَاسْتَسْلَمَ إِلَيْهَا،

Has no mercy on him who seeks sympathy from it, and has no power to relieve him who humbles himself before it and submits to it;

تُلْقِيْ سُكَّانَهَا بِأَحَرِّ مَا لَدَيْهَا مِنْ أَلِيْمِ النَّكَالِ وَشَدِيْدِ الْوَبَالِ،

It meets its inhabitants with the hottest pains that it possesses; painful punishment and intense noxiousness,

وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَقَارِبِهَا الْفَاغِرَةِ أَفْوَاهَهَا، وَحَيَّاتِهَا الصَّالِقَةِ بِأَنْيَابِهَا،

I seek refuge in Thee from its gaping jawed scorpions, its scraping-toothed serpents,

وَشَرَابِهَا الَّذِيْ يَقْطَعُ أَمْعَاءَ وَأَفْئِدَةَ سُكَّانِهَا، وَيَنْزِعُ قُلُوْبَهُمْ،

And its drinks, which tear apart the intestines and hearts of its inhabitants and root out their marrows

وَأَسْتَهْدِيْكَ لِمَا بَاعَدَ مِنْهَا وَأَخَّرَ عَنْهَا، اَللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ،

I ask guidance from Thee to that which will keep (me) far from it and make it retreat! O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household

وَأَجِرْنِيْ مِنْهَا بِفَضْلِ رَحْمَتِكِ، وَأَقِلْنِيْ عَثْرَتِيْ بِحُسْنِ إِقَالَتِكَ،

Grant me sanctuary from it through the bounty of Thy mercy. Release me from my stumbles through Thy good releasing

وَلاَ تَخْذُلْنِيْ يَا خَيْرَ الْمُجِيْرِيْنَ، اَللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ تَقِي الْكَرِيْهَةَ، وَتُعْطِي الْحَسَنَةَ،

And abandon me not, O best of the sanctuary-granters! O Allah, Thou protects from the disliked, and givest the good,

وَتَفْعَلُ مَا تُرِيْدُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْئٍ قَدِيْرٌ، اَللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ،

Thou dost what Thou will, and Thou art powerful over everything. O Allah bless Muhammad and his Household

إِذَا ذُكِرَ الْأَبْرَارُ، وَصَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ مَا اخْتَلَفَ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ،

When the pious are mentioned, and bless Muhammad and his Household as long as night and day alternate with

صَلَاةً لاَ يَنْقَطِعُ مَدَدُهَا، وَلاَ يُحْصَى عَدَدُهَا، صَلَاةً تَشْحَنُ الْهَوَاءَ،

A blessing whose replenishment is never cut off and whose number cannot be counted, a blessing that will fill up the air,

وَتَمْلَأُ الْأَرْضَ وَالسَّمَاءَ، صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى يَرْضَى،

And crowd the earth and the heaven! O Allah bless him until he is well pleased

وَصَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بَعْدَ الرِّضَى، صَلَاةً لاَ حَدَّ لَهَا وَلاَ مُنْتَهَى، يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ

O Allah bless him and his household after good pleasure with a blessing that has neither bound nor utmost limit! O the Most Merciful of the merciful!

This part illustrates the conditions of the awful inferno that has been prepared by Allah for His wicked slaves; those who spread tyranny, destruction, and corruption on this earth. They will undergo terrible punishments and awful torture. May Allah distance us and save us from them, Amen.

This is the supplication which Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) usually recited after his night prayers. This supplication is one of the best supplications of the Ahlul-Bayt (peace be on them). Some of his family members used to entertain fear for his life on performing unlimited worship.

Therefore, they met Jābir ibn Abdullah Al-Anṣari and shared their fears with him because he had a special position with the Imam.

Fatima, one of the Imam’s daughters said to Jābir, “O companion of the Prophet of Allah (ṣ), we have some rights over you, among which is this that if someone from amongst us is destroying himself, you should remind him of Allah and call him to look after himself. Don’t you see the condition of ‘Ali ibn al Husain the only son of Imam Husain? His nose and forehead have become swollen; his knees, palms and hands have protruded, all because of his excessive worship.”

Jābir immediately went to meet Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa). He found him in his place of worship (*mihrab*) busy praying. When the Imam (ʿa) saw him, he came to him, and greeted him warmly, respectfully. He made Jābir sit beside him and asked about him. Jabir turned to him and said politely, “O Son of the Prophet of Allah, don’t you know that paradise has been created for your sake and for those who love you while hell-fire is for those who hate and dislike you. With this great virtue of yours why do you engage yourself in excessive worship at all times?”

Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) answered, “O companion of Allah’s Prophet, don’t you know that the sins of the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) were pardoned, those of the past and the future, yet he never minimized the high momentum of his worship while seeking nearness to God –by my father and mother– until his legs and soles got swollen? He was once asked, “Do you still perform all these while Allah (swt) has pardoned all your sins, both past and future? He (ṣ) replied: “Should I not be a grateful servant?”

Feeling that he could not convince the Imam (ʿa), Jabir once again said to him: “O son of Allah’s Prophet, at least you should take care of yourself since you are from a family whose presence averts divine calamity, you people are a remedy to all difficulties and by the blessing of your presence rain falls.”

Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) answered softly and in a sad tone: “I will always follow in the footsteps of my father and grandfathers until I meet them.”

Jābir was overwhelmed by his attitude, so he turned to the people around him and said, “Among the descendants of the prophets there is no body like ‘Ali ibn al Husain (ʿa) except Yūsuf ibn Ya'qub. By God, the descendants of Imam Husain (ʿa) are more patrician than the

descendants of Yūsuf ibn Ya'qub (ʿa), because from among the descendants of Imam Husain (ʿa) there is one who would emerge and fill this earth with justice just as it has been filled with oppression."[1]

Yes! By God, among the descendants of all prophets, Imam ʻAli ibn al Husain's (ʿa) piety, devotion, and righteousness is incomparable. Jabir has rightly said that one of the descendants of Imam Husain (ʿa) will emerge to fill this earth with justice in the same way it has been filled with oppression and that person is Imam Mahdi (ʿa), as narrated from the Prophet of Allah (ṣ).

One of Imam Zainul Abidin's sons (ʿa), worried over his excessive worship, asked him: "O father, why are you always praying?"

He answered affectionately: "I want to express my love to my Lord."[2]

The Imam (ʿa) came to see Abdul Malik ibn Marwan to free a group of Muslims who were arrested. When Abdul Malik saw him, he was amazed at the marks of prostration on his forehead. He said, "It is very clear that you are a devoted man who worships Allah (swt) very much, you are part of the Prophet. Your lineage to him is very close and your relationship with him is very strong and intimate. Surely, you have been granted virtues, knowledge and devotion that no one has been granted in any era except to your grandfathers and ancestors before you."

Abdul Malik kept on telling him his virtues and great bounties that he possessed. When his speech was over, Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) only said: "All virtues that you have mentioned are only from Allah (swt), through His grace, support, and favour. Then, where is my gratitude over all these bounties? The Prophet of Allah (ṣ) always performed prayers (*Salat)* until his two feet got swollen and he fasted until his mouth got dry. He was once asked, "O Prophet of Allah, has not Allah pardoned your sins of the past and the future? He only answered: Should I not be a grateful servant?" All glories are for Allah over all bounties and calamities which He inflicts upon us and all glories are for Him in this world and in the Hereafter. By God,

1- *Hayatu Imam ʻAli ibn Al-Husain AS*, Vol.1 P.200-201.
2- *Biharu Anwar*, Vol.46, P.91.

even if all my body limbs were cut off and my appetizer dropped out, surely I would not be able to thank him for one-twentieth of all His bounties. Bounties which cannot be counted by all counters and no body is able to thank Him for even one bounty as it deserves even if praises of all things that glorify are put together. By God! I have never wished that Allah (swt) should see me busy with any other thing than thanking Him and remembering Him, whether during the day or at night, secretly or openly.

If it were not because of the duties I have towards my family and society according to my ability, surely I would face the sky and give my heart to Allah and I would not remove it again until Allah (swt) takes my soul for He is the best of Rulers in the Heavens and on the earth.”

Then, Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) cried bitterly. His words and spiritual condition affected the heart of the tyrant Abdul Malik. So, Abdul Malik said: “There is a great difference between a servant who only hopes for the Hereafter and struggles to gain it and a servant who only wishes for this world, while he does not have a share in the Hereafter.”

Abdul Malik complied with the order of Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) and was ready to free some groups of the Muslims (who were in his prisons).[1]

Such was the beautiful and amazing worship of Imam ‘Ali Zainul Abidin (ʿa). He was a spiritual symbol of all prophets. This worship of his demonstrates his obedience, piety and steadfastness on the path leading to Allah (swt). He loved God and sincerely worshipped Him.

His interactions with his slaves

One of Imam Zainul Abidin’s (ʿa) actions that deserve praise was his freeing of slaves and making them feel free with him while those slaves were happy under his auspices because he treated them as his own sons. He always forgave every mistake they made; whenever the month of Ramadhan came, he would free all his slaves.

1- *Hayatu-Imam ‘Ali Zainul Abidin (as)*, Vol.1 P.201-202.

Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) had never punished any slave, man or woman, for committing any mistake. He only used to write down the day the mistake was committed. At the end of the month of Ramadhan he would gather all of them and show them their record of sins. He would say to them: "Read it aloud". They would say, "O ʿAli ibn al Husain (ʿa), verily your Lord has counted all the actions that you have done, as you have counted all the actions that we have done. Just as you have done He has a book in which records of all things are recorded correctly. This book does not leave out any action of any kind, whether little or big, except that it records it.

Every soul will have all his actions presented before him in the similar way you have presented our actions before us. Therefore, please forgive us, just as you hope for forgiveness from the King of all kings and since you wish that He should forgive you. Hence, forgive us so that your Lord will forgive you and have mercy on you and pardon you, even though He does not oppress anybody. Just as you have a book that correctly records all the acts we have done, that book also does not leave out any action, big or little."

"Therefore, remember, O ʿAli ibn al Husain, your miserable condition in front of The Most Wise and Just Lord; The Lord who never oppresses even an atom's weight, He surely will bring it out on the day of judgement. Allah suffices as a witness and recorder. Therefore, forgive and pardon us, surely The King of all kings will forgive you. He decrees: ***"...And they should pardon and turn away. Don't you love that Allah should forgive you.?"***[1]

He dictated some statements to them, expressions relating his total submission and steadfastness in adhering to the rope of Allah. While he was dictating, all of them were crying bitterly for the fear of Allah and repeating softly: "O our Lord, You have ordered us to forgive those who have oppressed us. We have oppressed ourselves. We have forgiven those who have oppressed us, as you commanded. Therefore, please forgive us since You, O Lord, are more deserving in this regard than all those who are commanded to do that. You have commanded us not to reject a beggar who has come to knock at our

1- Suratu *Nur*: 22.

doors. Now we have come to You full of requests. We have come to You kneeling down on our knees in front of Your door, miserable, and requesting Your bounty and grace. Thus, pour Your bounty over us and disregard us not since You are the most Prominent of those who grant bounties to the servants who have received that command. O my Lord, You are the owner of bounty therefore, pour that bounty upon us when we request, for we need it and You are the Dispenser of bounty. Please put us among the receivers of Your bounty, O Essence of Benificence."

After that, he turned to them while his eyes were filled with tears. He said politely and softly: "I have forgiven you all. Have you forgiven me? If I have made a mistake it was due to my evil and oppressive tendency. I am also owned by the Glorious King, the most Generous, the Just and Giver of all Bounties."

What an angelic soul this great soul possessed reflecting the spirituality and character of all prophets!

Those servants said: "We have forgiven you, O our master, (if there ever was anything)".

Then, he said to them: "Say it, "O Allah, please forgive 'Ali ibn al Husain, as he has forgiven us and free him from the fire of Hell, as he has freed us from slavery."

After saying that, he added, "O Allah, The Lord of the Universe! Amen, Go away all of you. I have forgiven and freed you from slavery, since I hope that Allah will forgive and free me (from the fire of Hell)." When the day of Idul Fitr came, he gave them adequate presents so that they may be self-sufficient.[1]

The world of the pious persons has never found a person like this great Imam ('a), whether in terms of dedication, piety or obedience to Allah (swt).

His will and advice to his children

His will for his children:

1- Ibid., P.209-211.

1. He advised his children concerning companionship and friendship. Here is the text of his words:

"O my son, beware of five kinds of people. Do not befriend them, do not engage with them and do not accompany them on trips. Befriend not a liar, for he is like a mirage which makes distant objects seem near to you and makes close objects appear distant from you. Befriend not one disobedient to Allah, for he will sell you for a mouthful of food or even less than that. Befriend not a miser, for he will disappoint you concerning his wealth at a time you are most in need of it. Befriend not a fool for he will harm you when he intends to benefit you. Befriend not one who has cut off kinship relations, for certainly I have found him accursed in the book of Allah."

Of course, befriending these people ultimately results in woes, losses and disaster for one who befriends them. Unfortunately, most of these kinds are found in our society, both past and present, and are being befriended by many good and pious people.

2. The text of another valuable advice:

"O my son, be patient in the face of calamity, do not transgress over people's rights, do not respond to your brother who invites you to do something which is more harmful than beneficial to you."

His dua (prayers) for his children

Let us listen to what he said to his sons.

"O my sons, verily it is not because of your pleasing me that Allah has urged you to obey me, and it is not because of my pleasing you that He has warned me to observe your rights. The best of fathers is he who is not influenced by his love for his children and thus lags in his duties towards them. And the best of children is he who does not become rebellious towards his father because of the shortcomings of his father."[1] We hereby quote some of his exalted Islamic principles of education and training for his children:

He prayed to Allah the Most High;

1- Al-'lqd al-Faried Vol.3 P.89.

- to bless them with good health, both physically and religiously
- to purify their souls and spirit from evil things and sins
- to broaden His bounties upon them and not afflict them with poverty, for it is the most tragic and worst of calamities
- to guide them towards His pleasure and make them active in pursuing what is good and carrying out His commandments
- to make them love His friends and hate His enemies

Some of his wise sayings and teachings

Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) said: Whoever possesses four things has surely perfected his Islam; his sins are erased and he will meet his Lord, the Most High, while He is pleased with him:

One who fulfills his promise to people for the sake of Allah and He who is truthful and sincere in his dealings with people

He who feels ashamed to commit any evil act before God and people

He who deals courteously with his family

Signs of a true believer – Imam ʻAli Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) said: The signs of a true believer are five.

Avoiding sin when one is alone

Giving alms when one has little

Patience in adversity

Forbearance when one is angered

Giving alms at the time of fear

These five qualifies depict the faith of one whose soul has been filled with the fear of God, *Taqwa*.

Uttering kind words to people – Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) encouraged his companions to speak kindly to people, mentioning the advantages that can be derived from that: He said:

Kind words attract riches, increase wealth, delay death (increase in life span), increase love from family and lead to paradise.

Things that can save a believer from danger

Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) has numerated the factors that can save a believer from danger. He said:

A believer finds safety in three things.

Controlling his tongue from causing harm to the people or backbiting against them

Keeping himself busy with something that would benefit him in this world and in the Hereafter

Sincerely repenting over his misdeeds

His martyrdom

Such was Imam Zainul Abidīn (ʿa) who was unique in his manners, worship, and character, with which he had succeeded in ruling over the hearts of people. This was a threat to the Ummayads whose hearts were filled with malice for the household of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). One of them who hated the Imam (ʿa) most was Walid ibn Abdul Malik. Zuhri narrates that Walid once said to him: "I will never have peace of mind as long as ʻAli Ibn al Husain is living in the world," so he decided to assassinate him. He placed a lethal poison in his meal through his secret agent in Medina. After the Imam (ʿa) had taken the poison through his meal, his lean body which was already worn out due to excessive worship became weaker. Things got worse and he had very little time before departing this world. He made his last speech: "All praise belongs to Allah who has fulfilled His promise to us and has given us the land as an inheritance, making our abode in paradise wherever we please. How excellent then is the reward of the righteous."

His great soul departed to the abode of paradise after it had illuminated all areas and corners of this universe; so, peace be upon him the day he was born, peace be upon him the day he attained martyrdom and peace be upon him the day he would be raised back to life again.

IMAM MUHAMMAD IBN ALI AL-BAQIR *(ʿA)*

Imam Muhammad Baqir (ʿa) is among the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) whom Allah (swt) selected for the deliverance of His mission on the earth and confined the successorship of His Prophet (ṣ) exclusively to them.

This great Imam (ʿa) took up the unique role of reforming Islamic education and laying the foundation of the scientific and intellectual movement at a time when intellectual stagnancy had struck all corners of the Islamic world.

The Islamic world was afflicted with successive revolutions and massive uprisings waged to free the oppressed from the oppressive Umayyad dynasty and their high-handed acts, and sometimes power mongers who only wanted to take over the government so as to have power over the wealth of the nation. They neglected education totally.

Indeed, Imam Baqir (ʿa) was the principal guide and teacher for this nation in terms of intellectual and educational progress. He had extraordinary knowledge of space and stars unknown to people at that time, He (ʿa) is regarded as the founder of this type of research and exploration.

Islamic jurisprudence takes its roots from the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa), carrying the spirit and fundamental principles of Islam. He revived it and established it. Many great scholars like Abaan ibn Taghlib, Muhammad ibn Muslim, Burayd, Abi Basir, Al-Fudayl ibn Yasar, Ma'ruf ibn Kharbawiz, Zurara ibn A'ayun gathered round him and are among the great learned scholars who compiled narrations on the approval and confirmation of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa). If it were not for their efforts all the abundant knowledge of jurisprudence, that the Muslim nation is proud of today, would have been lost.

The Imam (ʿa) educated these scholars, strengthened their virtues and positions and made the Ummah return to them and take verdicts from them. He (ʿa) said to the Islamic scholar Abaan ibn Taghlib: "Sit down in the Mosque and give verdicts (*fatwa*) to the people, because I want people to see such quality in my followers.

The Imam (ʿa) took care of these scholars' expenses and provided them with all their economic needs so that they could have enough time for their studies and apprehend fundamental rules and record principles. When death came to him he made a Will to his son Imam Sadiq (ʿa) to take care of them and their needs so that their economic needs might not take them away from continuing their studies and spreading it among the people.

Indeed these scholars took up the responsibility of recording down what they heard from the Imam (ʿa) and teaching it to their delegates. His learned student Jabir ibn Yazid Al-Ju'fi narrated six thousand traditions from him that are mostly on Islamic jurisprudence, just like Abaan ibn Taghlib. The encyclopedia on traditions and jurisprudence has many traditions that mainly concentrate on laws concerning acts of worship, legal transactions and *Iqa'at* (one-sided transactions) narrated from him.

He also paid special attention to the *tafsir* (exegesis) of the Glorious Qur'ān. All interpreters of Qur'ān have learnt much from him. They have recorded traditions that have been narrated from his ancestors concerning the interpretation of the verses of this Holy Book.

He has written a special book concerning the interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān. This Book was narrated by Ziyad ibn Munzir, the spiritual leader of Al-Jurudiyah school of thought.[1]

In our book entitling *Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (ʿa)* we have mentioned some of the verses and their interpretations as were received from him.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (ʿa), in his narrations, explained the life history of prophets (peace be upon them) and the pressures they faced, their wisdom, advice, and good manners.

The life history of the Prophet (ṣ) was described perfectly and correctly by him, as narrated later by Ibn Hisham, Al-Waqidi, Al-Halabi, and other historians who recorded the stories of the Prophet's (ṣ) wars and battles. Besides that, a lot of traditions and

1- *Al-Fihrist*, Sheikh Tusi, P.298.

narrations have been transmitted from him concerning ethics, moral, behaviour, and charitable actions.

It is pertinent to mention here that he once had an intellectual debate with a few scholars and personalities who were Christians, Azariqah, Atheists, and Ghulat. He was the winner in all the dialogues. All his opponents admitted his erudite ability and superiority over them.

We have mentioned this story in our book, *Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (ʿa)*, for interested readers.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (ʿa) spent his entire life in spreading and propagating knowledge among people. All narrators of traditions confess that he is the founder of the glorious school in Yathrib (now Medina) which disseminated the knowledge of the science of Jurisprudence, Tradition, Philosophy, Theology, and Interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān.

An important event that took place during the lifetime of Abu Ja'far (ʿa) was that he succeeded in freeing Islamic currency from the domination of the Roman emperor. Islamic Currency used to be printed or minted in the former states of the Roman empire, therefore they used to contain its slogans. The factor that forced Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa) to undertake this action -as narrated by narrators- was as follows:

Abdul Malik saw a currency note printed in Egypt. He commanded that the writing and the stamps on the currency notes should be translated into Arabic.

The note contained the Christian religious slogan, "God the Father, God the Child and God the Holy Spirit." He disliked it. He wrote a letter to the governor of Egypt, Abdul Aziz ibn Marwan and ordered him to withdraw the entire lot of currency notes from the market, cancel them and replace them with new notes bearing the slogan of *Tawhid* (monotheism) i.e., *There is no god but Allah.*

He also sent formal decrees to all regional governors who were under his jurisdiction to annul all bank notes on which the slogan of trinity was engraved and torture anyone who possessed that currency. That official decree was enforced in all the Islamic states.

The Emperor of Rome was furious when he became aware of that. He wrote a letter to Abdul Malik telling him that the currency should not be tampered with. He sent a big gift along with that letter. When the letter reached Abdul Malik he commanded that the big present should be returned with his rejection of the Emperor's request. The Emperor doubled his present and wrote another letter to him for the second time requesting that the currency note in question should not be tampered with and that he should not execute his order to that effect. He threatened to engrave on the dinar and dirham coins a statement insulting the Prophet of Islam (ṣ). Abdul Malik feared. He gathered all his people and informed them of this threat.

Ruh ibn Zanba said, "Indeed you know the way out of this problem, however, you intentionally do not heed it." Abdul Malik inquired, "Woe to you! What is that way?" He replied, "You should seek the opinion of Al-Baqir from the Ahlul-Bayt of the Prophet (ṣ)."

Abdul Malik accepted this proposal. He immediately wrote a letter to the governor of *Yathrib* and ordered him to invite Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa) to his palace and treat him with full respect. He also commanded him to prepare and supply all necessary requirements of the journey for him with an expense equal to one hundred thousand dirhams and provide him with a maintenance allowance of three hundred thousand dirhams. The governor of Yathrib executed all Abdul Malik's commandments. All these preparation were done so that the Imam (ʿa) may answer positively to their invitation.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (ʿa) left Medina for Damascus. On reaching Damascus, he was given an official state welcome and treated with reverence by Abdul Malik. He then informed him about the state problem he was facing. Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa) said to him, "This problem should not weigh you down, because this is not at all serious for two reasons.

Firstly, Allah Almighty will not allow the Roman King to implement what he has threatened to do to his Prophet (ṣ). *Secondly*, there is a solution for the problem."

Abdul Malik eagerly inquired, "What is the solution?" The Imam (ʿa) answered, "Call your expert currency printers right now. Command them to print the dinar and dirham currency notes in your presence.

Place the verse of *Tawhid* on one side of the note and the name of the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) on the other side. Write the state in which the currency is printed and the year of printing on the edge of the currency notes."

He taught him how the currency notes were to be printed. Afterwards, he commanded all transactions in all the Islamic states to be conducted with the new currency notes. Besides that, he commanded that the old currency notes in use should be cancelled and any person still using them in any transaction to be punished. Abdul Malik took the Imam's (ʿa) advice.

When the Emperor of Rome came to know that he would no longer control their currency, he became weak and all his efforts to frustrate became futile. The former currency that was in use was cancelled and all transactions were now done with the new currency notes printed as suggested by Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa). This currency remained in effect till the period of the Abbasids.[1]

The Islamic world is indebted to Imam Abu Ja'far Al-Baqir (ʿa) for rescuing the Islamic State currency from Roman subordination and making it independent. Finally, the Islamic State was able to print its currency with its own anthem.

The life history of Imam Abu Ja'far Al-Baqir (ʿa) would be incomplete without shedding light on his character and conduct that make him the dignity and pride of the Islamic world.

His Endurance (*Al-Hilm*)

Endurance was the most outstanding quality of Imam Abu Ja'far (ʿa). All biographers mutually agree that he never did anything bad to the people who oppressed him. Instead, he forgave them and was kind to them. One instance of his endurance is manifested in the following story:

There was a native of Syria who often attended his religious sessions and listened to his lectures carefully. He became interested in his speeches and said, "O! Muhammad, I attend your sessions not

1- *Hayaul-Hayawan*, Ad-Dumairi, Vol.1 P.63-64; *Al-Muthala'a Al-'Arabiya*, Vol.1 P.31.

because I love you, for I believe that there is no one I hate more than you (i.e. Ahlul-Bayt). I believe that adherence to Allah and my *Amir* means hatred for you. However, I come to your meetings because of your eloquence and excellent manners. I visit you often just because of your noble manners."

Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa) turned to him with affection and softness. The man was made to understand the reality and the truth. His hatred for the Imam (ʿa) changed into fervent respect and love. He adhered to this love until he died. He wrote a Will requesting Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa) to lead his funeral prayer.[1]

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (ʿa) inherited the traits of his grandfather i.e. the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) with which he unified different hearts and integrated diverse characters and manners, and brought mankind under the umbrella of *Tawhīd*.

His Patience (*Aṣ-Ṣabr*)

Patience in the face of all tragedies and humiliation was another quality of Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa). He was patient in facing the degradation that the rulers of his time meted out to his ancestors in the mosque during Friday sermons. He heard all that but circumstances did not warrant him to speak out, hence he tolerated all that with pain and patience. Indeed, he had been patient over what was more painful than the thrust of a sword.

Among the greatest trials that Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa) faced with full patience were the horrible brutalities that the authority meted out to his followers, the Shi'a of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa). They faced inhuman persecutions; the eyes of some of them were gouched out, the hands of others were cut off, while some were murdered on mere suspicion, while he could neither help them nor save them from these miseries.

The following two stories depict the Imam's (ʿa) grand level of patience:

One day he was sitting with his companions when suddenly he heard people screaming from within his house. Some of his companions

1- *Hayatul-Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as)*, volid 1, hal. 131.

rushed to him and whispered that one of his slaves was carrying his infant son and the baby fell from her hands and died instantly. Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa) said, "All praise be to Allah for all that He has given us and that which He has taken from us belongs to Him. Please stop them from wailing and ask them to be patient, and prepare his funeral ceremony. Please tell the slavegirl that she has been freed for the sake of Allah and because of what she has suffered out of fear." After uttering these words, he continued his discussion with his friends.

One of his slaves came to him and said, "All preparations for the funeral ceremony have been completed." He informed all his companions and requested them to offer the funeral prayer with him and then bury him.[1]

The second instance is when his beloved child became seriously ill. He was very sorrowful over the disease that had struck his child. The child passed away. He faced this tragedy with absolute calm and patience. All his companions said, "O son of the Prophet of Allah, we are worried about you." He replied: "Indeed we pray for what He loves and when that which we do not like happens we never oppose Allah's Will.[2]

Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa) confronted all worldly miseries and calamities with unshakeable patience and strong faith. He prayed only for Allah's reward.

His affection for the poor

Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa) had great affection for the poor and needy. He always met them with extra respect and honour. He advised, his family members, concerning beggars, not to say, "O beggar take this", but: "O servant of Allah, may Allah bless you".

Likewise, he commanded them to address the beggars by their best names. This kind of noble ethics and behaviour were inherited from

1- Ibid. P.122.
2- *Tarikh Dimashq* (hand written), Vol.51 P.52; *'Uyun Al-Akhbar*, Ibn Qutaibah, Vol.3 P.57.

his grandfather i.e. the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) whose excellent merit and virtues surpass all other prophets of God.

Building friendly relations with Muslims

Imam Abu Ja'far (ʿa) loved strengthening relationships with his fellow Muslims, brothers and sisters; paying attention to their needs and striving to fulfill them, doing what would relieve them and make them happy.[1] He instilled in his teachings the need of loving people and making friendly relationships (*Silatu-rahm*). Ibn Asbagha said: "Muhammad ibn ʿAli Al-Baqir –despite all his knowledge, virtue, authority and Imamate– was very generous towards all classes of people. He was well known for his generosity and kindness towards people though he had a large family and shouldered their responsibility alone in an average income."[2]

In his own words: "There is nothing good in this world except showing kindness, making friendly relationships (*silatu-rahm*) with fellow brothers and sisters in faith."[3] We have explained his generosity and largeheartedness in our book, (*Hayatu Imam Al-Baqir (ʿa)*. Interested readers may refer to it.

His worship

As far as worship is concerned Imam Abu Ja'far Al-Baqir (ʿa) is regarded as one of the spiritual Imams or leaders and masters of all worshippers. He worshipped Allah (swt) with perfect sincerity. Whenever he stood up to perform prayer, the colour of his body would turn pale[4] because of his fear of Allah (swt). He used to perform as much as one hundred and fifty "rakaat" (units) of prayer[5] day and night,[6] despite his position as the sole authority whom people

1- *Al-Bayan wa At-Tabayin*, P.158.
2- *Al-Fusul Al-Muhima*, Ibn As-Sabagh, P.277.
3- *Sara Safiya Abi Firas*, Vol.2 P.176.
4- *Sifah As-Safwah*, Vol.2 P.63; *A ʿyan Ash-Shiʿa*, Vol.4 P.506, section one.
5- (Islam) essential unit of prayer ritual, consisting of bows and prostrations performed a prescribed number of times, *translator*.
6- *Tarikh Ibn ʿAsakir*, (hand written), Vol.51 P.44.

referred to in matters of leadership and knowledge. While in the state of prostration he always read the following supplication:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّيْ حَقًّا حَقًّا، سَجَدْتُ لَكَ يَا رَبِّ تَعَبُّدًا وَ رِقًّا.

اَللَّهُمَّ إِنَّ عَمَلِيْ ضَعِيْفٌ فَضَاعِفْهُ لِي.

اَللَّهُمَّ قِنِيْ عَذَابَكَ يَوْمَ تَبْعَثُ عِبَادَكَ وَ تُبْ عَلَيَّ،

إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ

"Glory is Thine, O Allah, truly, truly, Thou art my real Lord,

I prostrate before Thee, my Lord, with full submission as your slave!

O Allah, verily my deed is little. Hence, double it for me,

O Allah, save me from Thy torture

When Thou awaken all your servants and forgive me,

Verily, Thou art The Most Forgiving"[1]

He also recited other supplications in the *qunut* or while in prostration which we have included in our book called *Hayātu Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (ʿa)*.

His ascetic life

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (ʿa) led a most ascetic life in this world. He always restrained himself from the luxuries of this world. He never spread a carpet in his house or on ceremonies, but always spread a mat made of date frond.[2]

He used things that were necessary and related to the truth - and thus he met Allah with a humble heart.

Jabir ibn Yazid Al-Ju'fi said, "Muhammad ibn 'Ali (ʿa) once said to me, "Oh Jabir! Indeed I feel grieved and my heart is disturbed..."

1- *Furu' Al-Kafi*, Vol.3 P.323.
2- Ibid.

I immediately inquired, "What is your grief and what is it that disturbs your heart?" He replied, "Oh Jabir, indeed whoever's heart is occupied with the religion of Allah cannot be occupied with any other thing except that…. Oh Jabir, what is this world? And what do you expect it to be? It is nothing more than that which you ride on, clothes which you wear and a woman you enjoy…"[1]

His wise sayings

Many wise short sayings are attributed to Imam Abu Ja'far (ʿa). These wise sayings are expressions of high values, true wisdom, and worthwhile experience.

Among the wise sayings are the following:

"For whoever Allah (swt) is not the sole adviser, verily others' advice will not be useful to him in the least."

"Those who claim to know Allah avoid immoral acts." Thereafter, he recited the following couplet:

If honestly thou love, undoubtedly thou would surely adhere to Him

Because a lover always adheres to his lover's commandments

"You can know the extent of the love existing in your brother's heart with the love you have for him in your heart."

"Indeed a believer is the brother of another believer; he does not scorn him or boycott him; he does not nurse suspicion against him."

"Allah said, 'O Adam, avoid what I have forbidden you, undoubtedly (by so doing) you will become the most "*Wara'*" (cautious servant)."[2]

"An affliction does not befall a slave (of Allah) except that it is because of a sin he has committed."[3]

1- *Da'aim Al-Islam*, Vol.2 P.158.
2- *Tuhaf Al-'Uqul*, P.292-300.
3- *Usul Al-Kafi*, Vol.2 P.269.

His advice to his Shiites

Imam Abu Ja'far (ʿa) delegated some of his friends to a group of Shiites and commanded them to give the following message from him to them:

"Please convey my regards to all our followers and admonish them to fear Allah the Most High; the rich people among them should visit the needy ones among them. The healthy people among them should visit the ill ones; those who are still alive among them should attend the funeral ceremony of those who have passed away; and that they should have meetings and sessions in their houses, because meeting and visiting among themselves will enliven our mission. With the hope that Allah will bless those who enliven our mission and practice all our commands in the most deserved form as much as possible. Verily, we will not be able to free them from their accountability before Allah and nothing can save them except their pious deeds. They will never gain our *wilayah* (loyalty) except with *wara'* (cautiousness) and hard work. Verily, the people who will regret most on Doomsday are those who were praised for a charitable act which they did not perform, the same applying to their other charitable actions."[1]

His martyrdom

Imam Abu Ja'far (ʿa) did not die a natural death. However, some sinful persons who did not believe in Allah and the Day of Judgement plotted and killed him with a lethal poison. The person who carried out this crime was Hisham –according to one opinion, and Ibrahim – according to another opinion; but it is of higher probability that the Imam's (ʿa) murderer was Hisham, because he had great envy and ill will for the Prophet's (ṣ) family. Zaid ibn 'Ali revolted against him because Hisham confronted him with all kinds of insults and oppression and forced him to revolt against the governing forces till he attained martyrdom during the reign of Hisham.

1- *Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as)*, Vol.1 P.253.

The main reason that made Hisham decide to kill Imam Abu Ja'far (ʿa) was that his virtues and great personality had spread all over the Islamic world. Muslims everywhere talked about his endless divine gifts and genius.

After the poison entered his body it reacted painfully. Death drew near until he finally met Allah (swt) while reciting some verses of the Holy Qur'ān.

With his departure a chapter of Islamic history – in which he had bestowed progress and awareness to all areas and corners of Islamic world was closed.

His holy body was laid to rest in the cemetery of Baqi' beside his father Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) and his grandfather Imam Hasan (ʿa). May his soul rest in perfect peace forever.

IMAM JA'FAR IBN MUHAMMAD AS-SADIQ (ʿA)

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) is the leader of this *Ummah*, its revolutionary thought and knowledge that has filled this world, according to Al-Jahiz. It was from his abundant knowledge that the leaders of the four Sunni Islamic sects fetched their Islamic laws concerning worship, transactions, covenants, or *iqa'* (one sided contract) etc. His principles of jurisprudence are still fresh and fruitful. All jurists of the Imamiyya sect refer to this jurisprudential wealth in enacting Islamic laws; all lawyers also use it in formulating new legal principles.

Imam Sadiq's (ʿa) knowledge was not limited only to jurisprudence, prophetic traditions and theology, but also covered physics, chemistry, medicine and other branches of knowledge which he himself founded. He discovered oxygen and explained the chain of molecules that constituted it. He was the one who discovered that the atmosphere was not a single element (*basith*), but a composition of many elements.

His knowledge of astronomy revealed the hidden reality of this universe and the world of planets, their orbits etc. All the Western scientists accepted these facts and studied them thoroughly. This can be found in the writings of one of his pupils Jabir ibn Hayyan, a scholar of the East, who confessed that all he had written was received from Imam Sadiq (ʿa). All Western scientists confess their indebtedness to Imam Sadiq (ʿa), affirming that he was a person who possessed a great sense of human initiative.[1]

Ironically, some Oriental scholars believe that Imam Sadiq (ʿa) was not an Arab because the East never possessed the intellectual ability which he possessed. They forget that Imam Sadiq (ʿa) came from the prophetic family and had successfully spread awareness and knowledge on this earth from what he had inherited from his great grandfathers. His knowledge enlightened the minds of mankind resulting in its development and progress.

1- *Al-Imam Ṣādiq (as) Kama 'Arafahu 'Ulama' Al-Gharb*, P.120-130.

The intellectual potential of Imam Sadiq (ʿa) confirms the belief of the Shiite sect concerning the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa), which is that Allah (swt) has bestowed on them wisdom and knowledge of many sciences, just as He bestowed special knowledge on all His Prophets and Messengers.

We will briefly relate the biography of Imam Sadiq (ʿa) and some of his personal qualities of character and noble traits.

Biography

Imam Abu Abdullah Sadiq (ʿa), full of revolutionary and cultural ideologies, grew up in one of the greatest and best houses of Allah, a house from which the Message of Islam originated bringing civilization to nations and mankind as a whole.

His grandfather, Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa), was the one who took care of his education. His deep belief in God and great piety were inherited by his grandchild.

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) spent twelve years of his life in his custody. During these twelve years, he experienced the very fragrance of the life of his grandfather that was a reflection of the life of the prophets and messengers of Allah (swt).

He possessed every noble quality by which one could get closer to Allah (swt) and every virtue that could uplift man's spirit. Imam Sadiq (ʿa) was always in the company of his grandfather Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) whenever he was busy worshiping Allah (swt) at night or fasting during the daytime.

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) saw his grandfather, Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) shoulder sacks full of money and food after mid-night and distribute them among the poor and needy who did not know him.

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) saw his grandfather spreading divine knowledge among the people. The seekers of knowledge gathered around him to benefit from his deep knowledge and emulated him in writing and spreading wisdom, supplications, and verdicts.[1]

1- *Hayātul-Imam Muhammad Al-Bāqir as*, Vol.1 P.38.

After his grandfather passed away, his father Imam Muhammad Al-Bāqir (ʿa) carried on the duty of looking after him. He always attended his father's classes that were held at home or in the Prophet's (ṣ) mosque, while he was still growing up as a child.

Imam Sadiq's (ʿa) intelligence quotient excelled all his father's students, even though they were famous elderly Muslim scholars. This reality was confirmed by Umar ibn Abdul Aziz before Walid ibn Abdul Malik when he performed the pilgrimage and visited Medina. Walid had once said to Imam Abu Ja'far (ʿa), "Verily your son, As-Sadiq is the greatest scholar of this age, even though he is still young.[1]

According to Imam Sadiq (ʿa), the noblest act is being good to one's parents.[2] He always said, "Verily Allah will lighten the pangs of death for people who are good to their parents...."

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) became a complete copy and picture of his father during his ten years stay with him until he passed away. He accepted the burden of spiritually guiding the people. Jurists from all over the world gathered round him and narrators of the prophetic traditions acquired various branches of knowledge, wisdom, and good manners from him.

His vast knowledge

Sheikh Abu Zuhra writes, "Imam Sadiq (ʿa) was the intellectual power of his time. He did not limit himself only to teaching Islamic knowledge and sciences of the Holy Qur'ān or Traditions and Creed, but he also gave scientific knowledge concerning this great universe.

Likewise, he paid extra attention to the human soul. If philosophy and historical science contend that Socrates succeeded in making science descend from the sky for mankind, then verily Imam Sadiq (ʿa) revealed the reality of the sky, the earth, human beings, and laws of all heavenly religions."[3]

1- *Al-Imam al-Ṣādiq as Kama 'Arafahu 'Ulama' Al-Gharb*, P.112.
2- *Wasilatul-Ma'al fi Manaqib*, P.208.
3- *Al-Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)*, P.101-102.

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) created something new in the Islamic civilization by encouraging scientific investigation not only in the Islamic world, but all over the world.

University of Imam Sadiq *(ʿa)*

The University of Imam Sadiq (ʿa) was the most prominent Islamic educational institution during the Abbasid dynasty. This university offered programs that improved the educational standard of the people and succeeded in triggering off various types of knowledge which had never been recognized before in human society. This University can boast of producing the best thinkers, competent philosophers and reliable Muslim scholars.

Some researchers have made this comment, "The reality is that the Islamic and Arabic civilization are both indebted to this highly developed and progressive educational institution whose founder was Imam Sadiq (ʿa), who commanded intellectual supremacy derived from valuable prophetic heritage."[1]

A famous scholar said, "One of the obligations upon us is to mention Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) as the prime founder of the early instructions in spiritual Philosophy. As an inventor of chemistry, affirmed by Jabir son of Hayyan Ash-Shufi Ath-Thursusi, he was the only person who released Islamic ideology from a limited to a very wide scope predominated by healthy and free-thinking scientific observation, concept and logic."[2]

We have discussed this educational institution in our book called *Mawsu'a Al-Imam Sadiq (ʿa)* (Encyclopedia of Imam Sadiq (ʿa) in detail. We will briefly discuss it here:

a. Central University

The university was in Medina, within the precincts of the Prophet's (ṣ) Mosque. He gave all his lectures and orations inside this mosque, and some times in his house.

1- *Hayātu Imam Ṣādiq (as)*, Vol.1 P.131.
2- *Jaʿfar Ṣādiq Mulhim Al-Kimiya*, P.32.

b. Delegations of intellectuals

All scientists and knowledgeable persons from different parts of the Islamic world hastened to joint this big institution.

Sayid Abdul Aziz Al-Ahl writes, "Kufa, Basrah, Wāsit and Hijaz sent their reliable scientists from various tribes, like the Bani Asad, Ghina, Mukhariq, Tayy, Sulaim, Ghaṭfān, Ghifār, Al-Azd, Khuza'a, Khash'am, Makhzum, Bani Ḍabba, Quraish, especially from Bani Haris ibn Abdul Muṭṭalib and Bani Hasan ibn 'Ali ('a) to seek knowledge from Ja'far ibn Muhammad ('a). Quite a few free people and sons of prominent Arab tribes loyal to the Ahlul-Bayt ('a) and others from Persia, especially Qum, came to seek knowledge from him."[1]

All contemporary Islamic states of that time sent their best sons to acquire the knowledge of science and Islamic laws from him.

c. Number of students

Four thousand students sought knowledge from the University of Imam Sadiq ('a).[2]

This was a number that had no equal in any higher institution of learning during that period. *Al-Hafiz* Abul Abbas ibn 'Uqdah Al-Hamadani Al-Kufi has written a book containing the names of narrators who narrated traditions from Imam Sadiq ('a) and he ascertained that they were four thousands in number.[3]

Dr. Mahmud Al-Khalid commented, "The trustworthy narrators from the companions – i.e. the companions of Imam Sadiq ('a) were four thousand. We are not surprised about this number. In fact we would be surprised if the contrary was the case."[4]

1- *Ja'far bin Muhammad (as)*, P.59.
2- *Al-Irshad*, vol. 2 P.179; *I'lam Al-Wara*, Vol.1 P.535; *Al-Mu'tabar*, Vol.1 P.26.
3- Sawa'iqul Muhriqa: 120.
4- *Al-Usul Fikriyatu Lil Thaqafatu Islamiya*, Vol.1 P.203.

In the book *Al-Mu'tabar*, Al-Muhaqqiq writes, "During the period of Imam Sadiq (ʿa), a lot of narrators (whose numbers were as much as four thousand narrated) traditions from him."[1]

Sayyid Muhammad Sadiq Nasy'at comments, "The house of Ja'far Sadiq was functioning like a university. It was always occupied by competent Muslim scholars in the field of Prophetic Tradition, Interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān, Philosophy and Theology. His lessons were often attended by two thousand people and sometimes by four thousand prominent Muslim scholars. They had compiled the prophetic traditions and lessons in books that had been accepted by all the students in his class. These books now serve as a scientific encyclopedia for the Shiites or Ja'fari school of thought."[2]

We have written the biography of three thousand six hundred sixty two narrators of his traditions in the book called *Mawsu'a Al-Imam Sadiq (ʿa)*.

d. Branches of Imam Sadiq's University

A majority of the Muslim scholars who graduated from Imam Sadiq's (ʿa) university, returned to their countries and each and every one of them founded various scientific centres and religious schools, the biggest of which was the university founded in the Jami'a mosque in Kufa (i.e. the Central Mosque of Kufa).

Hasan ibn 'Ali Al-Washsha' said, "I have studied in the Jami'a mosque of Kufa from nine hundred *sheikhs* (learned men). Each one of them always said, "Haddathani Ja'far ibn Muhammad", i.e. Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad has narrated this tradition to me.

Sayyid Mir 'Ali Al-Hindi commented, "In brief, we can say that the spread of knowledge at that time succeeded in liberating minds from stagnation so that philosophic debates dominated scientific sessions in every area and corner of the Islamic states. We need to add here that the person who led this great and wonderful movement was the grandson of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (ʿa) called Imam Ja'far, As-Sadiq (ʿa). People who attended his class were not only those who became

1- *Hayatu-Imam Ṣādiq as*, Vol.1 P.134.
2- *Imam Aṣ-Ṣādiq wa Mazahib Al-Arba'a*, Vol.1 P.62.

Imams or leaders of the *Imamate* sect, but there were other students of philosophy coming from different parts of the world."[1]

Some of the erudite families in Kufah gained eminence by becoming the Imam's students, and were recognized as specialists in the field of Jurisprudence and Tradition. These people include the family of Al Hayyan At-Taghlibi, Al-A'yun, Bani 'Athiyah, Bani Darraj, and other erudite families.[2]

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) lived in the city of Kufah for two years. He lived in the area of Bani Abdul Qais. All Shiite students met him in large numbers requesting verdicts based upon Islamic laws from him. Concerning the great number of people who met him daily, Muhammad ibn Ma'ruf Al-Hilali has narrated this story: "I once went to Hirah to meet Ja'far ibn Muhammad. I was not able to see him because of the too many people who wanted to meet him. On the fourth day, he saw me and came close to me when the people had started leaving because he was intending to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of his grandfather Imam ʿAli Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa). I followed him and listened attentively to his utterances while walking with him."[3]

Academic curriculum

Lessons and lectures of Imam Sadiq (ʿa) covered all types of knowledge. The following branches of knowledge were taught by him:

- Jurisprudence.
- Science of the Prophetic traditions.
- Science of the Holy Qur'ān.
- Medical Science.
- Chemistry.

1- *Ja'far bn Muhammad (as)*, P.59.
2- *Tarikhul-Kufa*, P.408.
3- *Hayātul-Imam Ṣādiq (as)*, Vol.1 P.136.

- Physics.
- Botany; Science of plants.

Recording by writing

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) emphatically instructed all his students to write down all lessons and lectures he had delivered for they would be annihilated if they were not recorded. Abu Bashir narrates when he once paid a visit to Abu Abdullah's (ʿa) house and he asked, "What prevents you all from writing? You will not be able to memorize and retain knowledge without writing it down. I received a group of guests from Basra who asked me many questions on different issues and they recorded and wrote down the answers I gave."[1]

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) was so concerned about keeping records and penning down information that he commanded his student Jabir ibn Hayyan to invent a non-inflammable paper. Jabir fulfilled his request. After it was ready he wrote a book with his hand and threw it into the fire but the book did not burn.[2] Unfortunately no narrators have mentioned the name of that book or what was written in it.

All Muslim scholars who were students of the Imam promptly obeyed the Imam's instructions. Jabir ibn Hayyan wrote down the Chemistry lessons he had received from the Imam. He wrote five hundred theses on Chemistry.[3] These theses became the major references in the field of chemistry for scientists.

Glorious researchers like Sheikh Aqa Buzurg Tehrāni -May Allah brighten his eternal abode- has written the biography of all the two hundred writers among his students.[4]

1- *Mustadrak Wasa'il*, Vol.17 P.292, tradition 292.
2- *Al-Imam Ṣādiq Kama 'arafahu Ulama'ul-Gharb*, P.54; *Jabir ibn Hayyan wa Khulafa'uh*, P.57.
3- *Mir'atul-Jinan*, Vol.1 P.304; *Al-A'lam*, Vol.1 P.186.
4- *Az-zari'atu*, Vol.6 P.301-374.

His excellent character

The excellence of the qualities possessed by the Imam (ʿa) cannot be challenged. Here are a few of his personal qualities:

a. Nobility of conduct

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) possessed the utmost nobility of conduct. The following story shows his gentleness with the people who maltreated him.

One of the pilgrims suspected that his wallet was missing. He searched here and there but could not find it. He rushed to the mosque of the Prophet (ṣ). Suddenly he saw Imam Sadiq (ʿa) praying. He got hold of him, unaware of his identity and asked, "Did you take my wallet?"

The Imam turned to him with a smile and asked him, "What was in it?" He replied, "1000 dināars."

He gave 1000 dināars to that person. After accepting the money he returned to his lodging place. Suddenly he found his wallet lying in the lodging. He rushed out to meet Imam Sadiq (ʿa) and took the money to apologize and return. He did not accept that money and said, "This is something which has gone out from my hand, and it is not possible that it should come back to me." The man was surprised by his behaviour and began to ask the people, "Who is this man"?

One of the residents replied, "This person is Ja'far Sadiq (ʿa)." On hearing his name, he said, "It is not surprising; it is only their type who can behave like this."[1]

b. His humble heart

The Imam (ʿa) always used mats made from date-palm leaves[2] to sit on and objected to sitting on luxuriant carpets. He also rejected every arrogant person. He questioned someone who came from a particular tribe by saying, "Who is the most prominent person of your tribe?"

1- Hayatu Imam Sadiq (as), Vol.1 P.66.
2- An-Nujum Az-Zahiratu Vol.5 P.176.

He answered, "I am." He added, "Were you their most prominent person you would certainly not say 'I am'."[1]

One manifestation of the Imam's (ʿa) humility was his respect for other fellow human beings: Once, one of the black residents of Kufa who was always with him was absent, so he inquired about him. The people replied with a smirk: "He is someone from Najashi's tribe."[2]

The Imam replied, "All human beings are from Adam. What is most important in a human being is his mind, dignity of religion, generosity, and piety."[3]

Indeed humility is the highest personal quality that raises the calibre of human honour, prestige and perfection.

c. His endurance

The Imam's (ʿa) endurance at the time of misfortunes or tragedies was extraordinary. One day, unexpectedly, his son Ismāil, who was highly respected by the Alawiyyun for his knowledge and character, passed away. A few days later, Imam Sādiq (ʿa) invited some of his well-known companions for dinner. He looked so normal and undisturbed that one of his companions was forced to ask: "I do not see any sign of sorrow in you over your son's death?"

He replied, "Why should I not be as you see me, after what the most truthful person i.e. the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) said to his companions, "Verily I, and all of you will pass away."[4]

d. His generosity

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) was the most generous person and one who was the most useful to people. All narrators of prophetic traditions have related many examples concerning his generosity. Among his generosity is the following story:

1- At-Tabaqat Al-Kubra, Vol.1 P.32.
2- Najashi is an Arab tribe living in the middle of Kufah and Basra.
3- Hayatu Imam Ṣādiq (as), Vol.1 P.66.
4- *Manaqib ʿAli Abi Ṭālib*, Vol.4 P.345; *Amali At-Tusi*, Vol.1 P.287.

Ashja' As-Sullami once visited Imam Sadiq (ʿa) at his home and, finding him in pain, asked him the cause of his illness. He replied, "Forget the cause of my disease, tell me your need."

He recited the following couplets:

May Allah bestow on you good health from it

Both in your deep sleep and in your wakefulness

May He remove disease from your body

As He has removed humiliating inquiry from you

The above couplets show how Imam Sadiq (ʿa) comprehended his need. He asked his slave, "How much do you have with you?" He answered, "Four hundred."

He commanded that all should be given to the visitor.[1]

All narrators of traditions narrate that he consistently distributed clothes and food among the needy.

The following story manifests his generosity:

One day, a man who disagreed with him, passed by him while he was having his lunch. The Imam invited him to have lunch with him. Some of the attendants protested against this action of the Imam and said, "According to the tradition of the Prophet (ṣ) he is supposed to greet us before he is invited for lunch, which he did not."

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) replied, "Miserliness is a trait of the Iraqis"[2]

e. Giving alms in secret

Just like his grandfather, Imam ʿAli Zainul Abidin (ʿa), Imam Sadiq (ʿa) visited the poor at midnight, so that they never knew who their benefactor was. At night, he would shoulder a sack full of bread, meat, and money. He would then distribute these items to the needy people in society to fulfill their needs while they did not know who he was. In fact they did not know the reality until he

1- *Tarikhul-Islam*, Vol.6 P.45; *Mir'atuz-Zaman*, Vol.6 P.160; *Tahzibul-Kamal*, Vol.5 P.87.
2- Hayatu Imam Sadiq (as) Vol.1 P.64.

passed away. After his departure, a vacuum was created in those nightly visits and gifts, and then they realized that all they used to get was from him.[1]

Among such secret donations was one narrated by Ismāil ibn Jabir as follows:

"Abu Abdullah (ʿa) gave me fifty dināars and said, "Please give this money to so and so of Bani Hashim (clearly describing him), and do not tell him that I have given the money to you." I left to meet that person and deliver that money to him. He asked me who had sent that money. I informed him that the money was from someone who did not wish to be identified. Then Bani ʿAli added, "This person has been regularly sending me amounts that suffice me for my annual expenses. However, Ja'far has never given me a dirham, even though he has a lot of wealth."[2]

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) concealed his donations to achieve Allah's pleasure on the day of judgement.

f. Fulfilling people's needs immediately

Whenever someone asked Imam Sadiq (ʿa) for something, he would hasten to fulfill it. One of his companions once asked him, "Why do you always fulfill people's needs immediately?" He replied, "I fear that if I do not, someone else will do that before me and I would miss the reward."

Such was Imam Sadiq (ʿa), a shining model for every generous and virtuous person.

g. His worship

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) was not different from his honorable ancestors in terms of worship and obedience to Allah (swt). He was a most devoted worshipper of his time. He always spent his spare time in performing prayers for the sake of Allah (swt). He never neglected any recommended prayer, and performed it with total humility and attention. He used to fast during most days. He would welcome the

1- Hayatu Imam Sadiq (as).
2- *Majmuʿau Warram*, Vol.2 P.82.

month of Ramadhan with enthusiasm and longing. He used to recite some supplications during the month of Ramadhan during the day and night which we have mentioned in our book called *As-Sahifatus-Sadiqīyya*.

He performed the hajj rituals with such humility before Allah (swt) that Sufyan Ath-Thawri writes: "By God, I have never seen any pilgrim in *Mash'aril-Harām* so involved with such complete devotion in his adoration and supplication better than Ja'far ibn Muhammad. On reaching Arafat, he isolated himself from all other pilgrims and occupied himself with the recitation of supplications and invocations."[1]

Bakr ibn Muhammad Al-Azdi related, "I was once performing *Tawaf* i.e. (circumbulation of the holy Kaa'ba) while Imam Abu Abdullah (ʿa) was beside me performing *Tawaf* too. When he finished his *Tawaf*, he stood aside and performed two raka'āt of prayer in a place called *rukunil-Bayt* and *Hajarul Aswad* (black stone). When he prostrated, I heard him reciting the following supplication: "I prostrate my face before Thee with total submission and humility; there is no god but Thee who is true and real, the First before everything and the Last after everything. Here I am, helpless before Thee; my fore-lock lies in Thy hands, hence forgive me, for no one can forgive major sins except Thee, so please forgive me (O my Lord)."[2]

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) was a paragon in the field of worship for emulation by people who wish to repent and achieve piety. We have explained his worship in detail in our book called *Mausu'atu Imam Sadiq (ʿa)* {Encyclopedia of Imam Sadiq (ʿa)}.

His words of wisdom

All narrators of traditions have narrated many wise sayings of Imam Sadiq (ʿa) that concern all aspects of human life. Among those pearls of wisdom are the following:

1- *Hayatu Imam As-Ṣādiq (as),* Vol.1 P.71.
2- *Qurb Isnad*, P.28.

"If you hear a Muslim utter something sincerely, give it the best interpretation possible. If you are not able find the best interpretation for that then you should blame yourself."[1]

"Whoever Allah (swt) removes from the meanness of immorality and places in the position of obedience, He indeed enriches him without (material) wealth and gives him companions without partners and makes him great without relatives."[2]

"The closest thing that could plunge a believer into disbelief is to remember his brother's fault so that one day he can blame him for it"[3]

"Sins deprive people of means of livelihood."[4]

"The worst of the major sins is to deny what has been revealed to us by Allah."[5]

"Every disease surely has a cure and the cure for the sin is to seek forgiveness from Allah."[6]

"Removing a mountain from its place is easier than changing someone's heart."[7]

"If everything of your worldly matters is okay then you should check your religion."[8]

"Two believers never meet without the best of them being he who loves the other most."[9]

"A servant of God will not be a true believer unless he possesses fears and hopes, and he will not fear or hope unless he works for what he fears and hopes."[10]

1- *Jamharatul-Awliya*, Vol.2 P.79.
2- *Bahjatul-Majalis*, Vol. 1 P.394.
3- *Da'aimul-Islam*, Vol. 2 P.12.
4- *Al-Ghayat*, P.100.
5- *Al-Ghayat*. P.85.
6- *Jami' ul-Akhbar*, P.22.
7- *Tuhaful-'Uqul*, P.357.
8- *Al-Hukm Ja'fariyah*, P.46.
9- *Al-Mahasin*, P.209.
10- *Majmu'a Warram*, Vol.2 P.185.

"My best brother is he who reminds me of my fault."[1]

"He is not our follower who utters something with his tongue but contradicts it with his actions and manners. However, our follower is one whose tongue and heart follow in our footsteps and practice our charity. Indeed, those are our real followers."[2]

"One who has a pure mind always has sincere intentions."[3]

"Do not rejoice over the calamity which befalls your brother lest Allah may have mercy on him and may inflict the same calamity on you."[4]

"Your secret is in your blood therefore don't let it flow in your non-blood vessels."[5]

"Unlawful means of livelihood has a negative impact on the offspring."[6]

"Allah increases the means of livelihood of one who has good intentions."[7]

"Do not talk before somebody you fear will contradict you, and do not ask someone you fear will not give you, and do not feel secure with one you fear can deceive you."[8]

"Good deeds prevent tragic and evil death, while giving alms extinguishes God's wrath, maintaining ones contact with relatives increases lifespan and eliminates poverty; and the saying of *Lā haula wa lā quwwata illa billah* is a treasure of Paradise."[9]

1- *Tuhaful-'Uqul*, P.366.
2- *Usul Al-Kafi*, Vol.2 P.196.
3- *Hayatu-Imam As-Sadiq (as)*, Vol.4 P.481.
4- *Al-Imam As-Sadiq wa Mazahib Arba'a*, Vol.4 P.354.
5- Ibid. P.351.
6- Ibid. P.357.
7- *Al-Mahasin*, P.207.
8- *Tadzkirah Abi Hamdun*, P.85.
9- Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi, Vol.3 P.116.

Towards aheavenly abode

Imam Sadiq (ʿa) always opposed the tyranny of the Abbasid ruler, Mansur, who felt very uneasy because he saw him as a threat to his rule. Finally, he poisoned him through his governor in *Yathrib* (Medina). The Imam (ʿa) experienced great pain and restlessness before his holy soul departed to meet his Lord as one of the most dignified holy souls that has ever ascended to heaven.

Thus, the pillar of Islam, the leader of intellectuals and scientific revolution passed away. Indeed, he had no equal except his grandfather. His son, who was his Wasi, Imam Al-Kazim (ʿa), executed his will and made the necessary preparations for his burial. Imam Al-Kazim (ʿa) washed his body, shrouded him and prayed for him, and then buried him in the cemetery of Baqi' beside his grandfather Imam Zainul Abidin and his father Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (ʿa).

With his departure, knowledge and all the noble traits that could revive life were buried with him.

IMAM MUSA IBN JA'FAR AL-KAZIM *(ʿA)*

The life of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far Al-Kazim (ʿa) reflected the spirit of the Prophet of Allah (ṣ), his struggle, dedication and steadfastness in propogating the principles of Islam.

His wide knowledge

All narrators and biographers unanimously agree that Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) was the most pious person of his time. He had immense knowledge and led a remarkably gnostic life. All Muslim scholars and narrators at that time sought and received knowledge from him. Many of them wrote to him seeking Islamic verdicts from him, and wrote down his sayings which were full of wisdom and ethics. He was an Imam of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) and he was the first person to introduce the chapter that dealt with the unlawful and lawful in Islamic law.[1]

Many great and famous Muslim scholars and jurists graduated from his school during that period. We have written the biography of almost all his companions and narrators who were as much as 331 in number in our book called""*Hayātu Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʿa)"* (Life of Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʿa)).

Some of them played important roles in the field of knowledge and science during that period. Some were seriously involved in debates and discussions with all Muslim scholars from other factions and denominations who denied the *Imamate* school of thought. Among the most prominent of the Imam's (ʿa) companions in the field of debates and discussions was Hisham ibn Hakam. He held many discussions and interesting debates with the people of Barmaki.

In a debate that was held in the verandah of the Abbasid ruler's palace, he succeeded in proving and justifying the Shiite's belief with regard to the question of *Imamate*. We have explained this story in

1- Al-Fiqhu Islami Madkhala Lidirasatu Nizam Al-Mu'amalat, P.160.

Hisham ibn Hakam's biography on the second chapter of our book (*Hayātu al-Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʿa)*).

Debates of Imam Musa Kazim *(ʿa)*

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) used to conduct admirable and interesting debates with his foes, Jew and Christian scholars which demonstrated the extent of his broad knowledge. Those who debated with him confessed their weakness and defeat when they succumbed to his strong proofs and arguments. They admitted that his knowledge was far superior to theirs. Some of the Imam's debates are:

1. Debate of Imam *(ʿa)* with Nafi' al-Ansari'

Ansari was one of those who hated Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa). He became furious when he saw how the Imam (ʿa) was honoured and respected in the Abbasid palace. In one of such meetings in which the Imam (ʿa) used to meet with Hārun, he met Nafi'. At that time, the Imam was busy talking to Abdul Aziz when Nafi' asked: "Who is this man?" Abdul Aziz replied: "He is the famous Musa ibn Ja'far from the family of Abi Talib." On hearing that Nafi' said: "I have never seen anyone more surprising than the clan of Abbasids. How on earth can they conduct such feasts, send invitations and respect someone who can overthrow their government? I swear, if he goes out, I will treat him badly."

On hearing this, Abdul Aziz cautioned him not to do that to the Imam and said: "Don't do that, because verily they are members of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) against whom no one has said something without being defeated with their answer and being humiliated forever."

When the Imam (ʿa) went out from the meeting room of Hārūn, Nafi' came near him, caught the rein of his horse and said: "Who are you?" The Imam answered: "O Stranger, if you meant my lineage, I am from the family of Muhammad *Habibullah* (the lover of Allah), son of Ismāil *Zabihullah* (slaughtered for the sake of Allah), and the son of Ibrahim *Khalilullah* (the close friend of Allah). If you meant the city from which I am, then I am from the city that Allah had made obligatory upon people including you to conduct the rituals of Hajj. If you meant tribe, by God, the unbelievers from my clan did not see the believers from your clan as their equal and demanded from the

Prophet (ṣ): "O Muhammad, please choose for us those who are our equal from the tribe of Quraish. So, let go the rein of my horse."

Nafi' became speechless and was extremely annoyed by the Imam's (ʿa) answer.[1]

2. Imam with Abu Yūsuf

One day Hārūn commanded Abu Yūsuf to present some difficult questions on jurisprudence before Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) that he would not be able to answer, with the aim of humiliating him. Abu Yūsuf confronted him in a corner, while, at the same time, Hārūn met the Imam (ʿa).

- Abu Yūsuf: "What is your opinion concerning being under the shade for the people who have already worn the *Ihrām*?"

- The Imam (ʿa): "It is not proper for them to do so."

- Abu Yūsuf "If one makes or builds a tent and comes into it like a house, is that right?"

- The Imam (ʿa): "Yes."

- Abu Yūsuf: "Then what is the difference between them?"

- Imam (ʿa): "Is a menstruating woman obliged to do *"qada"* (make up for)[2] for her missed prayer?"

- Abu Yūsuf: "No, She is not."

- Imam (ʿa): "Is she obliged to make up for her fasting."

- Abu Yūsuf, "Yes."

- Imam (ʿa): "Why?"

- Abu Yūsuf, "That is how the Islamic law has come with it."

- Imam (ʿa): "Likewise that is how the Islamic law has come with it i.e. with regard to your question."

1- *Nuzatu An-Nazir fi Tanbihi Khatir*, P.45.

2- The performance of a duty that has lapsed unperformed, like a prayer that was not performed in its proper time.

Abu Yūsuf kept quiet. He did not know what to say. Hārūn noticing his embarrassment said: "I did not see you do anything." He said, "He has thrown a sharp stone which has hurt my brain." The Imam (ʿa) went out while Hārūn Rashīd looked gloomy because he had failed to humiliate the Imam (ʿa).

3. Imam with Hārūn Ar-Rashīd

Hārūn arrested the Imam (ʿa) and put him into prison. He remained there for some years. One day Hārūn ordered that the Imam (ʿa) be brought before him. When the Imam (ʿa) was brought before him he spoke in a low voice because of anger: "O Musa ibn Ja'far, we have two caliphs, both of them are collecting tax from the people". The Imam (ʿa) turned towards him in a brotherly and soft manner and said, "I seek protection from Allah that you may not burden my name with your sins and accept what is wrong from our enemy. Indeed, you know fully well that since the demise of the Prophet (ṣ) people have fabricated lies against us. If you believe that there is a relationship between you and the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) then allow me to tell you one prophetic tradition which my father told me from his fathers and from my grandfather the Prophet of Allah (ṣ). Hārūn said, "I allow you to do that." The Imam (ʿa) said, "My father told me that his fathers narrated it from his grandfather the Prophet of Allah (ṣ), who said; "Verily when the body of a relative touches the body of another relative of his, the heart trembles (with tenderness and love), so extend your hand towards me."

Hārūn looked limp and extended his hand towards Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa), and drew the Imam (ʿa) near and hugged him while his eyes were full of tears. Then he said to the Imam (ʿa), "You are right, and your grandfather was right, indeed my blood is shaken and my sweat has trickled down making me become wet while my tears trickle down."

Hārūn then said: "I would like to ask you about something that has always been bothering me that I have never asked anyone else before. If you only answer my question, I will release you and not be among those who say anything against you. Indeed I have heard that you have never told a lie and I believe that, my question is concerning that which is in my heart."

The Imam (ʿa) said: "I will tell you if it is what I have the knowledge of on the condition that you will guarantee my security."

Hārūn said; "You are secure if you trust me and leave out *Taqiyya* about what you know."

The Imam (ʿa) said: "Please ask whatever you want to ask."

Hārūn asked: "Why are you people more honoured than us while we and you are from the same family tree, i.e. the sons of Abdul Muttalib; each and every one of us have the same father. The children of Abbas and the sons of Abu Talib, both of them were uncles of Allah's Prophet (ṣ) and their relationship to him is the same?"

Imam (ʿa) said: "We are nearer to the Prophet of Allah (ṣ)."

Hārūn said; "How can that be?"

The Imam (ʿa) said: "This is because Abdullah and Abu Talib are from the same father and mother, while your father Abbas was not from the same mother as theirs."

Hārūn said; "Why do you claim to be heir to the Prophet (ṣ), while in the Islamic law of inheritance an uncle prevents the son of an uncle from inheriting the deceased. When the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) passed away, Abu Talib had already passed away before him while his uncle Abbas was alive?"

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: "I wish *Amirul Mu'minin* will free me of this question and ask another question."

Hārūn said; "No, you must answer it."

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: "Then guarantee my security."

Hārūn said; "I have guaranteed it before the commencement of our discussion."

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: "One of the sayings of ʿAli (ʿa) clarifies this: "No body shares with the real child (male or female) of the deceased except their parents, husband or wife. Heritage was not determined for uncles and uncles are not entitled to heritage if the child of the deceased is alive; but, the tribe of Taim, Ady, and Umayya said, "An uncle is (like the real) father. This has no evidence from the Prophet of Allah (ṣ)."

Then Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) mentioned some of the jurists of that time who had given verdicts according the verdicts of his grandfather, Amirul Mu'minin 'Ali (ʿa), concerning this matter. In addition to this: "All earlier jurists among the Sunni scholars have narrated from the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) that he said; "'*Ali aqdakum*" ('Ali is the most knowledgeable among you i.e. in matters concerning judiciary)." Umar ibn Khattab also said: "'*Ali aqdana*" ('Ali is the most knowledgeable in judiciary issues among us) i.e. he is the best judge among us.""

Qada is a general noun, for it was among the things which the Prophet (ṣ) had commanded and praised people for. (*Qirā'a)* recitation of the Holy Qur'ān, (*faraid*) obligatory worship, and knowledge (*'ilm*) itself are included in *qada*.

Hārūn asked Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) to explain and throw more light on what he had said. Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: "Verily the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) was not inherited by one who did not migrate (*hijra from Mecca to Medina*), and Abbas did not confirm his loyalty (*wilāya*) until he migrated."

Hārūn said, "What is your proof?"

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: "Allah (swt) has declared, "*...And (as for) those who believed and did not migrate do not extend yours guardianship to them until they migrate*"[1], and indeed my uncle Abbas did not migrate".

Then Hārūn became furious and asked Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa): "Have you ever passed this verdict to any one of our enemies, or have you told somebody among the scholars?"

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: No, nobody has ever asked me this kind of question before."

Hārūn calmed down and said; "Why do you permit Sunni and Shiite people to attribute the title of the son of the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) to you? They address you by saying: O son of the Prophet (ṣ), whereas you are the son of 'Ali (ʿa). Verily a man's lineage is taken from his

1- Suratul *Anfal*: 72.

father and not from his mother, while Fatima (ʿa) was only a medium and the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) was your maternal grandfather not your paternal grandfather."

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) replied: "If the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) were to be living today and proposed for your daughter's hand in marriage, would you accept his proposal?"

Hārūn said: "Glory to Allah, why would I not accept it? Moreover I would be proud of that before the Arabs, non-Arabs and the Quraish."

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: "But he will not propose to my daughter for marriage nor is it possible for me to give my daughter in marriage to him."

Hārūn said: "Why would you not do that?"

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: "Because I am his direct son, while you are not."

Hārūn said: "Well done, O Musa, but how come you people often say: "Verily we are the descendants of the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) while the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) did not have descendants, because one's offspring comes from man not from woman. And you are a son from the offspring of the daughter of the Prophet (ṣ).

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: "I ask you for the sake of kinship between us to pardon me from answering this question."

Hārūn said: "No, I won't pardon you, you must give me the reason and proof for that O son of 'Ali. You, O Musa are the leader and Imam of this age now, so I won't pardon you."

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: "Do you permit me to answer that?"

Hārūn said: "Please!"

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: "Allah (swt) has declared: ***…and of his descendants, Dawūd and Sulaiman and Ayūb and Yūsuf and Hārūn. Thus do we reward those who do goodness (to others), and***

Zakariya and Yahya and Isa and Ilyās. Every one of them was of the good."[1]

Then the Imam (ʿa) said; "Who was the father of Isa, O Amirul Mu'minin?"

Hārūn said; "Isa had no father."

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said: "Allah included him among the descendants of the prophets through Maryam; likewise, Allah (swt) included us among the descendants of the Prophet of Allah (swt) through our mother Fatima (ʿa).

Hārūn demanded more proof on this matter.

Then Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said; "Allah (swt) has said; ***"But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge. Then say; Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars".***[2] So far, no one has ever claimed that the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) included any other persons under the Kisa'i or went for *Mubahalah* (to curse one another) between him and the people of the book, except 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain".

All of Hārūn's fears were enlarged, for indeed Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) had closed the door to all possible argument.[3]

We have collected the major part of the discussions in the first chapter of our book *Hayāt al-Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʿa)*.

Attributes of Imam Musa Kazim *(ʿa)*

We will briefly discuss some of the attributes of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa).

1- Suratul *Anam*: 84 and 85.
2- Suratul *Ali Imran*: 61.
3- Hayātu Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (as), Vol.1 P.261-265.

1. Abundant knowledge

All narrators have unanimously agreed that Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) was the most knowledgeable person of his time. His knowledge was a divine gift through inheritance and inspiration which is similar to the knowledge of all the prophets and their trustees, *Wasi*.

All Shiite theologians have proved this matter with proofs like the testimony of his father Imam Sadiq (ʿa) on his intellectual ability and potential. While introducing him, Imam Sadiq (ʿa) said to Isā, "This is my son; if you ask him about anything contained between the two covers of the *Mushaf* (Qur'ān), he will answer you with absolute clarity. He possesses wisdom, understanding, generosity and the skill of dealing with what they differ or dispute about in their worldly and religious affairs."[1]

Sheikh Mufīd says; "People have attributed to Abul Hasan Musa (ʿa) a host of narrations. He was the most knowledgeable person of his time."[2] These narrations reveal his intellectual level and his sense of logical argument which forced people to admit that he was the most learned person around.

2. Abstinence from worldly things

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) rejected the luxuries of this material world. He focused his attention on Allah (swt), and acted in a manner that could take him closer to Him. Ibrahim ibn Abdul Hamid, narrating a tradition concerning the ascetic life of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa), said: "One day I entered the Imam's house while he was praying. I found that there was nothing in his house except one sheet of rough cloth, a hanging sword, and pages of the *Mushaf*."[3]

Truly, the life of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) was a uniquely ascetic one. His house was very simply furnished. A lot of wealth accrued to him from the Islamic Shiite world but he donated it all to the needy and poor, or those working in the path of Allah (swt) seeking only His pleasure. Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) greatly admired the ascetic life of

1- Hayātu Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (as), Vol.1 P.138.
2- Al-Irshād, P.272.
3- Biharul Anwar, Vol.11 P.265.

the Prophet's companion Abu Zarr and once said to his companions concerning his lifestyle: "May Allah have mercy on Abu Zarr; truly," he used to say: "Allah has relieved me from the problems of this world by granting me two pieces of bread made from wheat flour. I take lunch with one and dinner with the other; and He has clothed me with two robes made of fur. I make a trouser with one robe and a shirt with the other"[1]

3. Generosity and humanitarian service

One of the Imam's noble attributes was his philanthropy. The statements of the poor and needy people ran thus: **"Indeed it is very hard to find anybody who has come to him in need to ever complain of insufficiency or poverty afterwards."** [2]

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) often used to go out in the darkness of the night to give packages of money to the poor and needy people, each containing as much as two hundred to four hundred dinars.[3] Poor people in Medina enjoyed maximum assistance, kindness, and gifts from Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa). In the first chapter in our book *Hayāt Al-Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʿa),* we have mentioned a great number of poor and needy people who had been helped by him.

4. Fulfilling others' needs

It was the innate nature of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) to solve the problems of others immediately. Among such people was a person who came from the city of Ray. He was in need of help from a judge who was a Shiite, so he left for Medina to meet Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) who immediately wrote a letter to him saying: *"Know it that under the throne of Allah (swt) is a shade where no one will reside except he who is kind to his brother or lightens his trouble or inserts happiness in his heart. This is your brother."*

With best regards

1- Usul Kafi, Vol.2 P.134.
2- 'Umdatu Talib, P.185.
3- Tarikh Baghdad, Vol.13 P.28, Kanz*ul Lugha*, P.766.

The man left with this letter from Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) and when he arrived at the palace, he knocked at the door and the Governor's servant came out and asked, "Who are you?" He replied: "I am a messenger from the Musa al Kazim (ʿa). He quickly went in and informed his master who came out bare-foot in haste.

He immediately enquired about the well-being of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) and greeted him warmly with great respect. On receiving the Imam's (ʿa) letter he kissed it, and after reading the letter, he told his slave to bring all his possessions. He divided them into two parts and gave one portion to that man. He then politely asked him, "My brother, are you happy with this?" The man replied, "Yes, by God, this is too much for me."

He then ordered all the man's debt to be paid off and he be made free from it. That man left the palace full of happiness and bliss and returned to his hometown. Not much later, he went to Medina and informed Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) about the kindness of the judge, hearing which he was pleased. The man asked: "O my master, are you happy to hear this news?"

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) replied: "Yes, By God, he truly has made me happy and made Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa) happy. By God, he has made the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) happy and Allah (swt) happy."[1]

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) was famous for this verdict among the Shiites: *Kaffara* (Atonement for sin of a judge) is to act kindly towards his brothers".

5. His worship and adherence to Allah (swt)

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) was the best worshipper of his time and named *Abdus-Sālih* (the pious servant) and *Zainul-Mujtahidīn* (the beauty of those who strive hard in worship). During his time, no man was seen worshipping Allah like he (ʿa) did. Many narrators say that when Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) stood up in front of Allah for prayer his eyes became wet with tears, his heartbeat increased and his body trembled because of the fear of Allah (swt).

1- Hayātu Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (as), Vol.1 P.161-162.

Imam Musa Kazim's (ʿa) great worship can be seen from the following narration: Once he entered the *Masjid Nabawi* early at night. He prostrated and was seen moaning with grief and fear of Allah (swt) saying; *"Truly my sins are numerous, please be lenient to me with your kindness, and pardon me from Thy side, O possessor of piety and pardon."* He repeated this sentence with abject humility until dawn.[1]

Whenever Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) performed the recommended prayers at night i.e. Tahajjud, he would continue until the dawn prayer, after which he would do *Zikr* (remembrance) until sunrise. Then he would prostrate before Allah (swt), and not raise his head from the prostration until close to mid-day.

Shaibani narrates that: "Abul-Hasan, Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa), every day for ten years, prostrated from sunrise until mid-day when Hārūn imprisoned him in the prison of Ar-Rabi. One day Hārūn looked into the prison from above his palace but he did not see any body in the prison; all he saw was a heap of static garment. He asked Ar-Rabi': "What is that garment that I always see lying in that place?" Ar-Rabi answered: "O Amirul Mu'minin, that is not a garment. It is Musa ibn Ja'far in the condition of prostration. Every day he does that from sunrise until mid-day."

Hārūn said with a sigh of surprise, "Truly he is the monk of Bani Hashim. Ar-Rabi turned to him and said, "O Amirul Mu'minin, why do you insist on detaining him in prison? Hārūn replied, "Woe to you, I really must."

Shaqiqa As-Sanadi ibn Shahik narrates that, when Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) was in the prison of his brother: "Verily Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa), after performing the Isha' prayers, would praise and glorify Allah (swt). Then he would supplicate to Him until mid-night; then stand up and perform the night prayers until the time of *Fajr* and offer the dawn prayer. After that, he would busy himself in the remembrance of Allah (swt) until sunrise, and then remain in prostration until mid-day. After that, he would perform ablution and

1- Wafayaat A'yan, Vol.4 P.93, Kanzul Lugha, P.766.

offer the *Zuhr* (afternoon) prayer. Then he would remain busy in the remembrance of Allah (swt) until *Maghrib* (sunset) and then perform the recommended prayers between the *Maghrib* and *Isha'* prayers. Such was his custom until he passed away from this world."[1]

His forehead had a swollen bump because of his prostration to Allah (swt) for long periods daily. Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) had a slave who used to cut off that (bump) from the forehead of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa). Concerning this matter, one poet said:

A protrusion formed on his forehead

Because of lengthy prostration which was painful,

He saw his imprisonment as a chance to express

His gratitude to the Almighty for His bounty over him

For more detail about Imam Musa Kazim's (ʿa) worship, you may refer to our book (*Hayātu Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʿa)*).

6. Forbearance and control of anger

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) was famous for his tenderness and great control of anger. He (ʿa) always forgave any one who did evil to him and pardoned one who transgressed against him. In fact, he was always responded with kindness to those who harmed him. This kind of noble trait had a purifying effect on selfish transgressors when they came in contact with him.

It is narrated that Amiri, a descendant of Umar ibn Khattab once treated him badly and abused his ancestors. Some of his companions wanted to discipline him with an iron hand but Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) prohibited them from doing that. He (ʿa) wanted to solve the problem in another way.

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) was told that he lived in a garden of Medina. Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) rode his horse through the garden in order to meet him. When the man saw Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) he recognized him and lost his temper; first, because of his earlier enmity towards

1- Tarikh Abi Al-Fida', Vol.2, P.12.

him and secondly, because the Imam had destroyed some of the planted crops by riding over them. The Imam (ʿa) alighted from his horse and spoke to him softly: "How much do you want as compensation for the damaged crops? The man said harshly, "One hundred dinars". Then the Imam (ʿa) said: "How much do you expect to get from it (i.e. after harvesting)?"Amiri answered:"I don't have knowledge of the unseen". The Imam (ʿa) said: "I mean how much do you expect to earn from the garden?" He said, "Two hundred dinars." The Imam gave him three hundred dinars and said: "This amount is for you and your garden's income is still yours."

The person was thoroughly ashamed of his behaviour. He went to *Masjid e Nabawi.* Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) welcomed him warmly. He stood up and drew closer to Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) and said loudly, "Allah knows best in whom He should place His message."

The companions gathered around him and asked about his sudden change of heart. He answered: "The generosity of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) is what changed me." The Imam (ʿa) then asked his companions: "Which is better, your way or mine?"[1]

Another incident of his generosity was that he once passed by a group of his opponents. Among them was ibn Hiaz. He ordered his friend to tie up the reins of the Imam's (ʿa) donkey and claim that the donkey belonged to him. His friend did as told. Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) descended from his donkey and gave it to him.[2]

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) always advised his sons to be generous to people. He said: "O my sons, whoever adheres to this piece of advice will benefit from it. If someone comes to you and abuses you in your right ear, and then in your left ear and thereafter begs pardon saying, 'I did not say anything', you should accept his apology."[3]

7. Standard of morality

Noble ethics is regarded as one of the fundamental principles and esteemed injunctions of Islam. The Prophet of Allah (ṣ) said, "Verily

1- Tarikh Baghdad, Vol.13 P.28-29, Kashfu Ghumma, P.247.
2- Hayātu Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (as), Vol.1 P.157.
3- *Al*-Fusul Muhimmah, P.22.

I have been sent to perfect morality." His standard of morality was a manifestation of the highest human values which the Holy Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (peace be upon them) followed. Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) practiced it himself and used to tell his companions to be an embodiment of noble manners to become a model for society.

8. His Patience

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) always advised patience in the wake of calamities. A man is not rewarded fully for the calamity that befalls him if he is not patient and totally drawn towards Allah, saying: the *Istrjā'an* i.e. *Inna lillahi wa innaa ilaihi rajiun* (We are from Allah and to Him is our return) whenever a calamity strikes him.

He also said, "Verily patience in calamity is better than health in peace."

9. Silence

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) maintained silence at all times and, while explaining the benefit of keeping silent to his companions, he said, **"Verily maintaining silence is a gate from among the gates of wisdom; it breeds affection and is the source of all virtues."**

10. Reconciling people

The Imam (ʿa) used to urge and encourage his companions to always pardon those who do evil to them and make peace between opponents. He explained the great reward they would have with Allah Almighty. He said, "On the day of judgement a caller will say, "If any one knows of a reward he has with Allah he should stand up; but no one will stand except one who used to pardon people or make peace between (two people)."

11. Speaking kind words

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) advised his companions to always say good words to the people and deal kindly with them. He once said to Fadl ibn Yunus, "Extend goodness to the people, say good words to them and don't be *Immā* to them." Fadl asked him, what *Immā* meant? Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said, "Do not say; I am like the people, I am just like any one of the people; for verily, the Prophet (ṣ) has said, "O

people! There are only two ways; the good way and evil way; so the way of evil should not be preferred by you over the good way."

12. Being grateful to God over favours

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) wished his companions should always reveal Allah's favour upon them and show gratitude over it. He once said: "Talking about Allah's favour or grace is a sign of showing gratitude to Him while abandoning that is disbelief. Therefore, always offer thanks to your Lord for any of His grace upon you; protect your wealth from danger by giving out *Zakat* and ward-off calamity through *du'ā* (supplication), for verily, *du'ā* is a protective armour that wards off calamities."

13. His wise sayings

Imam Musa Kazim's (ʿa) pearls of wisdom concerning moral and social problems are:

1 "Helping the weak is the best of all alms-giving."

2. "A believer is stronger than a mountain because a mountain can be destroyed by means of implements while a believer's faith cannot be destroyed by any means."

3. Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) said to Muhammad ibn Fadl: "O Muhammad! reject your hearing and your sight with regard to your brother even if fifty people swear that he said something about you while he says the opposite to you. Accept his words and reject the others'. Do not spread any news about him that would disgrace him or make him unhappy."

4. "The best of worship after knowing Allah is waiting for *Faraj* (relief) i.e. the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (ʿa) from the occultation."

5. "A believer is like the two sides of a scale; the more he increases in faith, the more his trials."

6. "Maintaining integrity and honesty attracts prosperity, while deception and lies attract poverty."

7. "Whenever people commit sins which they have never committed before, Allah inflicts trials upon them which they have never imagined."

Imam Musa Kazim *(ʿa)* in Hārūn's prison

The virtues, knowledge and impeccable character of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) spread everywhere and became the talk of the town, which was too difficult for Hārūn to swallow. Of course, Hārūn was notorious for showing enmity towards the descendants of ʻAli (ʿa). He was extremely perturbed by the fact that from the offsprings of Imam ʻAli (ʿa) came such nobility and wisdom. There was nobody the Muslims rallied round like Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa). They respected him and confessed that he was the best of people in terms of merits and virtues. When Hārūn came to Medina he greeted the Prophet (ṣ) and addressed him thus: "O Prophet of Allah, by my father and mother, I wish you will pardon me for what I have decided to do. I have decided to arrest Musa ibn Ja'far and detain him, for I fear that there will be war and shedding of blood among your Ummah (nation)."[1] Thereafter he ordered his soldiers to arrest Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa). They rushed to him and found him praying at the grave of his grandfather i.e. the Prophet (ṣ). They cut short his prayers for which he complained to the Prophet (ṣ) saying: "To thee I lay my complaint, o Messenger of Allah."[2]

They took the Imam (ʿa) in chains to Hārūn. When the Imam (ʿa) was in his presence he spoke roughly and rudely to him before taking him to prison in the year 179 A.H. during the last ten days of the month of Shawwal.[3]

Imam Musa Kazim *(ʿa)* in Basra prison

The tyrant (Hārūn) ordered that the Imam (ʿa) should be taken to Basra where he had ordered Isa ibn Abi Ja'far i.e. one of his wicked men to detain the Imam (ʿa) in one of the prison houses. He locked all the doors of the prison on him (ʿa) and would open them only when the Imam (ʿa) needed to purify or ease himself, and whenever he wanted to give a meal to the Imam (ʿa).

1- Biharul Anwar Vol.17 P.196.
2- Al-Manaqib Vol.2 P.385.
3- Hayātu Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (as) Vol.2 P.465.

A good chance for him to Worship his Lord

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) turned completely to the worship of Allah in the prison and regarded it as a good chance for that purpose. He never felt disturbed at all; he regarded it as one of Allah's favours upon him and thanked Allah (swt) for it, saying: **"O Allah! Thou knowest that I have always asked You to afford me ample time for worshipping thee, and now Thou hast granted it to me, to You is all praise…"**[1]

Commanding Isa to assassinate Imam Musa Kazim *(ʿa)*

The tyrant Hārūn commanded Isa, his representative in the Basra prison, to assassinate the Imam (ʿa), but this was too difficult for him to perform, so he consulted his colleagues about the possibility of executing this order. They told him that that was not possible, so he finally wrote a letter to Hārūn asking him to either refrain from doing that or relieve him of the task. The content of the letter is as follows:

"Indeed the detention of Musa ibn Ja'far has prolonged more than expected. I have watched him closely and sent spies on him on different occasions to watch and observe him but we have always found him in worship. He was never tired of worshipping his Lord. We have also sent some men to listen to his wordings and utterances carefully during his worship but we have never heard him praying against you or me, and he has never mentioned anything of our evil deeds. He was always praying to Allah to forgive him and have mercy upon him. Then on what basis must we kill him? If you still want to continue, please find somebody else to shoulder this responsibility or at least relieve me of it for I do not feel at ease in detaining him". Thanks.

His detention at the house of Fadl

Hārūn ar Rashīd accepted Isa's request and ordered that the Imam should be brought to Baghdad and kept under house arrest, Fadl ibn Rabi' after receiving the Imam (ʿa) kept him as a prisoner in his house. The Imam (ʿa) immediately resumed his worship. He was

1- Hayātu Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (as) Vol.2 P.466.

always fasting during the day and standing in prayer at night. Fadl was taken aback by the Imam's devotion and began to discuss the merit of the Imam's (ʿa) worship and obedience to Allah (swt) with the people.

Abdullah Al-Qazwini, a Shiite, said, "I came to Fadl ibn Rabi' while he was sitting in the balcony of his house. He asked me to come close to him. I moved closer to him until I was sitting face to face with him. Then he said to me, "Look down into the house." Abdullah looked down into the house. Fadl asked him what he could see inside the house. "I can see folded clothes," said Abdullah. Fadl said, "Look closely." Abdullah said he could see a man in prostration. He asked, "Do you know him?" Abdullah said no. Fadl said: This is your master." Abdullah said: "Who is my master?" Fadl said: Are you pretending to me?" He said: "No, I am not pretending, I do not know whom you mean." Fadl said, "This is Abul-Hasan Musa ibn Ja'far". Then Fadl began to discuss the Imam's (ʿa) worship with Abdullah, saying: "I have watched him day and night but I have never found him in any condition except what you have seen. Normally he offers the morning prayer and reads a supplication at the end of the prayer until sunrise. Then he prostrates before his Lord and remains in the prostrating position up to *Zawal*. He has appointed someone who informs him of *Zawal*. I do not know when that servant normally tells him about it, but he rises up and begins to pray again without the need for renewing his ablution. From this I know he has not slept while in prostration. He continues like that until he completes the *Asr* prayer. After praying he prostrates and remain in that position until sunset. After sunset, he rises up and offers the *Magrib* prayer without renewing ablution. He then offers the recommended prayers and *Duā'* after *Magrib,* until its time for the *Ishā'* prayer. After that he breaks his fast with a light prepared meal given to him. Then he renews his ablution and prostrates and then rises from the prostration and then takes a short nap. After that he again performs ablution and continues to pray until dawn. Then he repeats the same actions as explained in the above narration. This is his normal daily routine since he was handed over to me."

When Abdullah saw the way Fadl was describing the Imam's (ʿa) worship, he warned him not to cause any harm to him, saying, "Fear

God. Do not do anything that will result in harming him. As you know, no one does evil or causes harm to another person except that Allah (swt) will deprive him of His favours."

Then Fadl declared; "Indeed they have sent me several orders to assassinate him, but I have never responded to them. I have told them that I will never do that even if they kill me for not obeying them".

Imam *(ʿa)* fed up with constant imprisonment

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) was exhausted by the continuous imprisonment and prolonged stay in the prison of Hārūn ar Rashid. He prayed to Allah Ta'ālā to free him from the prison of Hārūn. He woke up at mid-night and offered four Rak'āt of prayers and prayed to Allah with this *duā'*:

"O my master, please save me from Hārūn's prison, free me from his clutches. O Thou who frees plants from between sand and clay, O Thou who brings forth fire from between iron and stone, O Thou who brings forth milk from between flesh and blood, O Thou who separates a baby from between the placenta and womb, O Thou who separates the soul from between intestines and stomach. Free me from the hands of Hārūn!"

Allah (swt) accepted the prayer of his beloved and freed him from the prison of the tyrant Hārūn. Hārūn released him from the prison because of a dream he had. We have explained this dream of his in detail in our book *Hayātu Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʿa)*.

His detention at the house of Fadl ibn Yahya

Soon after Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) was released from Hārūn's prison, he re-arrested him again and sent him to Fadl ibn Yahya's prison. Fadl ibn Yahya treated the Imam (ʿa) with such kindness that he had never experienced in any of his previous imprisonments. A traitor who came to know about Fadl's treatment and services offered to Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) informed Hārūn about it.

Hārūn became furious, so he ordered his soldiers to flog Fadl one hundred times, which they executed. Hārūn gathered all his ministers, commanders of soldiers and ordinary people and warned them seriously about the punishment he would mete out to any one who

disobeyed his orders. Raising his voice he said, "O people! Verily, Fadl ibn Yahya had disobeyed me and acted contrary to my command. Now I wish to curse him, so all of you should curse him together with me. Immediately, people from all corners cursed and condemned Fadl.

Yahya ibn Khālid, who was present at that time, went close to Hārūn and whispered in his ear: "Oh leader of the believers, verily Fadl is inexperienced and new to this game, but I think I will suffice you for whatever you want." He continued to talk secretly to him until Hārūn's anger subsided, then all of a sudden he started showing that he was pleased with Fadl again and said, "Although Fadl has indeed disobeyed me and I cursed him but now he has repented and ready to obey me, hence love him and befriend him."

Surprisingly, despite this open contradictory policy, once again the people raised their voices from all corners announcing their support and love for Fadl, saying: O commander of the believers we love whosoever you love and hate whosoever you hate, therefore we now love Fadl".

In the prison of Sindi

Hārūn Rashid ordered his men to transfer Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) from Fadl ibn Yahya's prison to the prison of Sindi ibn Shahik who was a Zoroastrian and very wicked. He believed neither in Allah nor in the Hereafter. The Imam was highly upset over this change. The treacherous Sindi poisoned Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa). The poison spread swiftly throughout the Imam's veins, causing serious discomfort and abnormal body pains. Finally, his soul departed to meet his Lord the Most High. The whole world became dark with the departure of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) while the hereafter was illuminated with his advance to that spiritual world.

Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) had actually undergone various types of sufferings and tortures for the sake of Allah (swt) at the hands of the wicked and oppressive leaders of his time led by the tyrant Hārūn Rashid, who was very wicked and notorious. His heart was full of envy and hatred for the descendants and family of the Holy Prophet (ṣ).

Hārūn set up a panel to probe and investigate the reason behind the death of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa). He did this so that no one may accuse him of killing Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) or bring an allegation or charge against him. Amr ibn Wāqid reports: "Sindi ibn Shahik sent for me at night while I was in Baghdad. I was worried and felt that he intended to do something bad to me, so I informed my wife of the message sent to me. She said, '*Ina lillahi wa innaa Ilaihi rajiun*' (From Allah we come and to Him we shall return). Then I rode my horse and went to him. When Sindi saw me advancing closer, he said to me, "Oh! Abu Hafsa, it seems you are worried as if we have frightened you by our message." I said, 'Yes, of course.' He said: "Feel at ease there is no problem except good." I said, 'Then send somebody to my family to inform them that nothing has happened to me.' He said, "No problem, I will do that".

After that Abu Hafsa felt relieved and calmed. Then Sindi said to him: "Do you know why I have sent for you?" He said, 'No, I have no idea.' He said "Do you know Musa ibn Ja'far?" 'Yes I know him very well; he has been my close associate for years.' He said, "Do you know reliable people in Baghdad (whose words can be believed) and whom you are sure know him very well?"

'Yes, there are.' Then Abu Hafsa mentioned some people who knew and recognised Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa), and they were summoned to come that very night. When they all gathered, Sindi ibn Shahik said to them, "Do you know people who know Musa ibn Ja'far? They mentioned some people who knew Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʿa). He sent for them to come that very night. He continued to gather people in this way throughout the night until dawn. At dawn over 50 men who knew and were familiar with Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʿa) had gathered at the house of Sindi. Sindi ordered his secretary to write down their names, their identities, particulars, residence address and their occupations. Thereafter, he came out with them and said to Amr ibn Wāqid: "O! Abu Hafsa stand up, go and unveil the cloth covering the face of Musa ibn Ja'far." Amr went and removed the cloth covering the face of Musa ibn Ja'far (ʿa), and unfortunately, they found out that he was dead. Then Sindi turned to the people and said, "Look very well at him." He took them closer to the sacred body and said to them: "Do you all testify

that this is the body of Musa ibn Ja'far?" They said, "Yes". Then Sindi ordered his men to remove the Imam's (ʿa) garment so that they could see his body. When his servants did that, he said to the people: "Can you witness any trace of injury on his body?" They replied, "No." "Is there any sign for you to object?" They said, "No." Then Sindi recorded their testimony and dismissed them. Afterwards he summoned all prominent jurists and important personalities of society for their testimony in order to justify Hārūn Rashid's innocence and ward-off any possible allegation of his killing Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʿa).

Imam's sacred body was placed on the bridge

After all these episodes had taken place, Sindi, apparently acting on the order of Hārūn Rashid, placed the body of Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʿa) on the bridge of Ar-Risafa so that every passer-by could see and watch it with disgust while the Imam's (ʿa) face was uncovered. They did that so that those who knew him would recognize that it was actually him and that he was dead. They also did that to show to the people that he was not immortal.

The aim of the tyrant leaders of this terror and oppressive regime was to humiliate the Imam's (ʿa) dignity and embarrass his followers with such a disgraceful act. In this regard, a poet has written the following:

A great man of such grandeur like Musa

Thrown on the bridge without soul

Nobody came to entomb him

They took him with his feet chained in iron

Sorrow and grief overwhelmed the masses.

Hārūn Rashid's effort was indeed a failure because the Imam's (ʿa) nobility and virtues were well known to the people and he would be remembered forever. His holy shrine is one of the greatest shrines of the pious servants of Allah. These shrines are spiritual treasure-houses that attract Allah's mercy and blessings. Muslims all over the world ceaselessly visit him and make a pilgrimage to his holy shrine throughout the seasons of the year. As for Hārūn Rashid today, there is no sign of him to be remembered. He and his family are buried in

eternal darkness. Additionally, Allah (swt) will definitely call him to book; he will have to account for all his crimes against humanity and his oppression and persecution of the pious servants of Allah (swt), especially the household of Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) throughout his reign.

The tyrant did not only humiliate Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa) by placing his corpse on the bridge but exceeded all bounds by commanding his men to carry the Imam's (ʿa) body on all the major streets of Baghdad, chanting, "Here is Musa ibn Ja'far who the *Rafida* (i.e. his followers) thought would not die. Look, he is now dead and has become a corpse." Instead of saying: "This is the body of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa), a good man who was the son of a good man," they said the opposite.

When Sulaiman ibn Abu Ja'far Al-Mansūr saw the holy body of the Imam (ʿa) being humiliated, he came forward and immediately took the body from them and announced his readiness to take care and make the necessary preparations for the burial. His men seized the Imam's (ʿa) body from Hārūn's soldiers and said loudly, "Whoever wishes to attend the funeral and the burial of the pious man, son of the pious man, Musa ibn Ja'far, should prepare to do that without any hindrance." On hearing that, thousands of people from different classes of life trooped out to participate in the funeral and the burial procession of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa).

The number of people who accompanied the Imam's (ʿa) funeral was unprecedented in the history of Baghdad. All the major streets of Baghdad were filled with sympathizers mourning the death of the Imam (ʿa), loudly chanting words of condolence, grief and sorrow over the departure of the great Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa). Sulaiman ibn Ja'far was leading the funeral with other great personalities.

The Imam's (ʿa) sacred body was brought to the cemetery of the Quraish in Baghdad. They dug the grave of Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa). Sulaiman ibn Ja'far descended and lowered the sacred body into his final resting place. Thus, the great Imam (ʿa) was buried with all his praiseworthy qualities of character, virtues, knowledge, generosity and noble ethics. Peace be upon him the day he was martyred and peace be upon him the day he would be raised to life again.

IMAM ʻALI IBN MUSA AR-RIDA *(ʻA)*

Imam Rida (ʻa) was a divine gift and token of Allah's mercy over His creatures. He was the eighth of the infallible holy Imams (ʻa) whom Allah (swt) has cleansed of sins and filth, *Rijis,* and purified with a thorough purification. Ma'mun once asked Abdullah ibn Matar, one of the leading thinkers of that time: "What can you say about the household of the Prophet i.e. the Ahlul-Bayt?" Abdullah answered: ***"What can I say of a people whose origin has been moulded by the divine message and watered by revelation. Can anything come from it except the perfume of guidance and fragrance of piety?"*** Ma'mun's heart was filled with envy by these words and because Imam Rida (ʻa) was present at that time he ordered that Abdullah be given pearls so that he may be prevented from saying any more.[1]

Imam Rida (ʻa) was an embodiment of all fundamental values and nobility. Here we will briefly recount some parts of his life.

His upbringing (early life)

Imam Rida (ʻa) grew up in the best and most respected Islamic home, the house of Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far (ʻa). That house was one of the centres of worship and obedience to Allah (swt), an educational institute from where knowledge spread among people. It produced thousands of great scholars, jurists and experts in literature. It was in this esteemed house that Imam Rida (ʻa) grew up and was nurtured on the noble ethics of his father and family that had been created to establish piety, goodwill and faith in Allah The Most High.

Imam Rida (ʻa) was very firm in upholding the truth and opposing tyranny. He always cautioned Ma'mun Abbasi to fear Allah, and always criticized him on his policies that were contrary to Islamic injunctions. Ma'mun was not happy with Imam Rida's (ʻa) constant correction of his work; consequently, he became antagonistic towards him and this enmity culminated in a decision to assassinate Imam Rida (ʻa). If the Imam (ʻa) had not opposed him on his un-Islamic

1- Hayātu Imam Riḍā (as) Vol.1 P.10.

policies and had kept quiet in the face of all his crimes and corruption, he would have become his closest associate and Ma'mun would not hasten to assassinate him through poison.

His high morals

Imam Ridā (ʿa) was an example for those who wished to emulate nobility of character and conduct. Whenever he sat to dine he would invite his slaves, guards and male servants to come and dine with him.[1]

Ibrahim ibn Abbas said, I heard ʿAli ibn Musa Ar-Rida saying; "Normally I always take an oath to free slaves and I have never taken an oath to free a slave without totally freeing him. In fact, I will free all the slaves I own, if I should feel that I am better than my slave. I am not closer to the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) than him due to my kinship to him (ṣ), but it is on the basis of good deeds and piety which, if I possess more than him, would be considered".

A man spoke up, "By God, you are the best of mankind." He (ʿa) refuted this saying and said, "O Men! Fear not (to say the truth); he is better who is more fearful of Allah (swt) and more devoted to Him (swt) than I am. By Allah this verse has not been abrogated, ***"Verily we have created you and made you into tribes and clans that you may know each other, surely the most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is the one among you who fears Allah most."***[2]

Imam Rida (ʿa) had inherited these noble qualities from his grandfather the holy Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) who was indeed the most distinguished and the best of Allah's prophets and messengers in terms of virtue and morality.

His ascetic life

Imam Rida (ʿa), like his respected grandfathers, tried his best to abstain from the luxuries of this material world.

1- Nuru Abṣār P.138.

2- Ṣuratu *Hujra*: 13. "One who fears Allah most is he who cares most to observe his duties towards Allah (swt)." Biharu Anwār Vol.12 P.28.

His grandfather Amirul Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib *(ʿa)* had divorced this world thrice, so that there remained no chance of returning to it.

Muhammad ibn Abbād narrates: "In summer Imam Rida (ʿa) used to sit on the mat made from the leaves of a date palm, and in winter he used to sit on rough cloth mats. His garments were made of rough cloth and he used wear them even when he went out to meet people or guests".

All historians unanimously agree that his acceptance of the so called *Wilayatu-Ahd* (the promised leadership) did not change his mode of life in the least; he never wore the crown or their official dress nor was he interested in the official protocol of the state.

He disliked fake glorification and unnecessary flattery of kings, as was the order of the day, to win their attention and get close to them.

He is quoted as saying: **"For a man to walk behind another man (as his guard) is a trial for the one being guarded and humiliation for the one who follows him."**

His immense knowledge

Imam Rida (ʿa) was the most learned and the most knowledgeable person of his time and the best in jurisprudence, philosophy, Qur'ānic sciences, medicine, etc. Al-Harawi while narrating his abundant knowledge said: "I have never seen some one who is more knowledgeable than Imam 'Ali ibn Musa Rida (ʿa), and no scholar or learned man who met him and did not testify to the fact that I have stated with regard to the superiority of his knowledge."

Ma'mun gathered many scholars, jurists, philosophers and theologians of all religions i.e. both Islamic and non-Islamic, whom he defeated so woefully that there was not one out of them who did not admit Imam Rida's (ʿa) superiority over him.

Al-Harawi heard the Imam (ʿa) say, "I used to sit in *Riyaz ul Jannah*,[1] and a number of scholars would surround me. Whenever one of us was called to answer or solve a problem they would point to me as the best person to answer them, and I would answer them and solve their problems accordingly."[2]

Ibrahim ibn Abbas said, "I have never seen Imam Rida (ʿa) being asked a question which he was not able to answer.[3] I have never seen any man who was more knowledgeable than him neither before him nor during his time. Ma'mun used to test him by asking him about everything he could think of and he used to answer accordingly."[4]

Ma'mun said, "I don't know any one who is superior to this man: meaning Imam Rida (ʿa) – on the face of the earth."

The different debates and dialogues that he had with different scholars in Basra, Khurasān and in Medina provide clear proof of the superiority of his knowledge over the scholars of the world. No debate ended without the debaters confessing that the Imam (ʿa) excelled them in knowledge. Thus, Ma'mun, being frustrated and not knowing what to do, was forced to keep him away from the people so that people would not be attracted to the Imam (ʿa) and neglect Ma'mun. Thus, the Imam was kept under a kind of house arrest for some time.

His wise sayings

There are a lot of wise sayings of Imam Rida (ʿa) that have been narrated. This is because he was a great teacher for the Islamic world during his time. He made a great effort to train, educate and purify the Muslims all over the world with his supreme noble and attractive words of wisdom. We hereby dive into the ocean of valuable pearls of wisdom:

1- It is a section of the Prophet's mosque which the Prophet (saw) has asserted in one of his sayings that it is a portion of Paradise.
2- Kashfu Ghumma: Vol.3 P.107.
3- In some manuscript: except he that he knows it.
4- Hayātu Imam Jawad (as) P.42.

Superiority of wit

As for wit, it is the best of all Allah's bounties upon mankind, which distinguishes man from other animals. Imam Rida (ʿa) has explained this reality in some of his narrations as quoted below:

1. He (ʿa) said, **"A friend of every man is his wit (sense of reasoning) and his enemy is his ignorance."**

Wit defends, protects and saves man from worldly trials and catastrophes, while ignorance pushes him into calamities and misfortunes.

2. Imam Rida (ʿa) said, **"The best wit or sense of reason makes a man know himself".**

Truly, if a man knows himself, it will also lead him to recognize his great Creator i.e. Allah the Most High. A prophetic tradition says, **"Whoever knows himself has indeed known his Lord."**

Accountability

He (ʿa) said, **"Whoever takes a (daily) account of his deeds, profits, and whoever is negligent of them is at a loss."**

Without doubt, if a person takes account of his deeds in terms of good and bad, it would prevent him from committing evil acts in the future and make him improve or increase his good deeds; a proof of the development of the soul.

Striving to earn a livelihood

Imam Rida (ʿa) said, **"Surely the reward of one who works and strives to earn a livelihood in order to support his family with it is better than the reward of one who fights "Jihad" (holy war) for the sake of Allah."**[1]

Working to gain means of sustenance for the family is equivalent to the struggle and fighting in the path of Allah; striving to earn is an honour and pride for the worker.

1- Usul Kāfi Vol.2 P.111.

The best of people

Once Imam Rida (ʿa) was asked concerning the best servants of Allah (swt). He replied: **"They are those who whenever they do good they are happy and whenever they do bad they seek Allah's forgiveness; when they are given any grace they are grateful and whenever they are afflicted with a trial they are patient; when they are angered they pardon and forgive."**

Indeed, whoever possesses these noble qualities is actually among the best of people. These are those virtues which one must possess to reach the peak of perfection.

His bequests and advices

1. Imam Rida *(ʿa)* in a bequest he made to Ibrahim ibn Abi Mahmud said,

"My father narrated to me from his grandfathers that the Prophet (ṣ) said; "Whoever listens to a speaker has indeed worshipped him. If the speaker is from Allah (swt) he has worshipped Allah Ta'ala but if the speaker is from the devil then he has worshipped the devil. He continued: O! son of Abi Mahmud, if you find people beating about the bush or going right and left, you should adhere strictly to our path, for he who adheres to us we also adhere to him and he who stays aloof from us we are also far away from him. Indeed, the smallest thing that can easily take man out of the circle of faith is, for instance, to say that this stone is a seed of date and believe firmly in that and disown whoever does not hold this view. O! Ibn Mahmud, please safeguard what I have told you for I have gathered in it the best things of this world and the hereafter."[1]

This Will shows the necessity of following the Ahlul-Bayt of the Prophet (ṣ) and receiving guidance through their ways, because in that there is salvation and security from destruction and victory in gaining Allah's (swt) pleasure.

1- Wasāil-Shi'a Vol.18 P.92.

2. Equality between the rich and the poor

Imam Rida (ʿa) made a Will to his companions that they should observe equality between the rich and the poor even while greeting each other: **"Whoever meets a poor Muslim and greets him in a different way from that of a rich Muslim, would meet Allah (swt) while He is angry with him."**[1]

3. Receiving a believers with a smiling face

Imam Rida (ʿa) made a Will to his companions that they should always receive a believer with a smiling face and not with a frown or harsh look. He (ʿa) said, "Whoever smiles upon seeing the face of his believing brother Allah writes a good deed for him, and for whoever Allah writes a good deed He will never punish him."

The Holy Imams made their companions copy their Will so that they would be models for following generations.

4. General bequests

Imam Rida (ʿa) bequeathed to his companions and the people the following:

He said; "Fear Allah with regards to His favours upon you; do not remove those favours from yourselves by violating Allah's law or disobeying Allah (swt). Know that you cannot thank Allah as He deserves in any way – apart from having faith in Him and in His messenger and testifying to the rights of Allah's pious servants among the family of Muhammad (ṣ), whom Allah loves. Then, by your good dealings with your Muslim brothers in their worldly affairs – that is a bridge– you must cross over to reach the paradise of your Lord. Verily, whoever does that would be among the special friends of Allah (swt) on the day of resurrection."[2]

His short speeches

Many short speeches of Imam Rida (ʿa) which contain valuable pearls of wisdom are as follows:

1- Wasāil-Shi'a Vol.8 P.442.
2- Durrun-Nazim P.215.

1. "He who serves a tyrant and is inflicted with a calamity will not be rewarded for it nor granted a reward for bearing it with patience."[1]

2. "Love of people is half intelligence."[2]

3. "There will come upon people a time in which safety and well-being will depend on ten parts; nine parts will be in keeping aloof from the people and one part in keeping silent."[3]

4. "Stingy and niggardly people do not possess calm; those who envy others do not feel comfortable; those who are always fed up with everything can never be loyal; and liars do not possess self respect."[4]

5. "Whoever relieves a believer from his problem in this world, Allah (swt) will relieve him of his problems on the day of judgement."[5]

6. "A believer is a brother to a believer like brothers from the same mother and father; accursed, accursed is he who falsely accuses his brother; accursed, accursed is one who cheats or deceives his brother; accursed, accursed is he who does not advise his brother; accursed, accursed is he who keeps away from his brother; accursed, accursed is he who slanders his brother."[6]

His understanding of all languages

Imam Rida (ʿa) knew all the languages. Ismāil As-Sindi narrates: "I heard in India that Allah (swt) has a *Hujja* (proof) who lives among the Arabs, so I set out searching for him and people directed me to Imam Rida (ʿa). I went to him and greeted him in my language of Sindi, and he replied in it. Then I said that I heard that Allah Almighty had a proof among the Arabs so I set out looking for him. He (ʿa) said, 'I am the one.' Then he said to me 'Ask whatever you

1- Tarikh Ya'qubi Vol.3 P.181.
2- Biharul-Anwār Vol.78 P.335.
3- Tuhaful Uqul P.446.
4- Tuhaful Uqul P.446.
5- Wasāil-Shi'a Vol.12 P.587.
6- Wasāil-Shi'a Vol.8 P.563.

wish to ask.' Then I asked him questions concerning some issues and he answered them all in my language."[1]

Abu Sulta Al-Harawi narrates: "Imam Rida ('a) used to speak to the people in their own languages. When I asked him about that he ('a) said, "O Aba Sulta! I am the *Hujja* i.e. proof of Allah over His creatures. It is not for Allah (swt) to send His *Hujja* over a people without understanding their languages. Have you not heard the saying of Amirul Mu'minin ('a): "We are given *Faslul-Khitāb* (decisive judgement) and that is nothing but our knowledge of all languages."[2]

Yāsir Khadim narrates: "Abul Hasan Ar-Rida ('a) had some slaves from Saqalaba and Rome. Passing by, he heard them speak in their Saqalaba and Roman language about something they were in need of. Thereafter, the Imam ('a) sent what they needed to them."[3]

Concerning this issue, Sheikh Muhammad ibn al Hasan Al-Hurr has written a couplet –

His knowledge of all languages is the clearest proof

Of his divine miracles and signs

Prediction of future events

Imam Rida ('a) informed the people of the occurrence of many future events which took place as he had predicted. This supports the claim of the Shi'as that the Holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt ('a) have extra-ordinary knowledge which is a divine gift similar to the knowledge given to the messengers and the prophets of Allah. Among the things that happened as the Imam had predicted was that Ma'mun would kill his brother Amin Ibn Zubaida. This was depicted in a poem that he composed as follows:

Truly, malice after malice would dominate you,

And remove away the hidden disease

Soon after this prediction Ma'mun assassinated his brother Amin.

1- Hayātu Imam 'Ali ibn Musa Ar-Riḍā (as) Vol.1 P.38.
2- Hayātu Imam 'Ali ibn Musa Ar-Riḍā (as) Vol.1 P.38.
3- Al-Manaqib Vol.4 P.333.

Another event which Imam Rida (ʿa) predicted that took place was the revolt of Muhammad ibn Imam Sadiq (ʿa). When Muhammad revolted against Ma'mun, he reprimanded him saying, "O my uncle! Do not defy the teachings of your father and your brother (i.e. Imam Musa Kazim). Indeed, your action will not succeed." However, he did not heed Imam Rida's (ʿa) warning and advice but went on with his revolt against Ma'mun. Ma'mun's soldiers led by Jahudi confronted him and defeated him. He sought political asylum from Jahudi which he later granted him. He climbed up the pulpit and surrendered himself saying, "Indeed Ma'mun is the rightful leader."

Another event that Imam Rida (ʿa) predicted before its occurrence was the great calamity that afflicted the clan of Baramaki. Yahya Al-Baramaki passed by the Imam (ʿa) and covered his face with a handkerchief to protect himself from dust. The Imam (ʿa) said, "Poor people! They do not know what disaster will befall them this year." Then he added saying: "A more wonderful thing than this is that I and Hārūn will be like these two fingers of mine" –he joined his forefinger to the middle finger.

Soon what he had foretold did happen. It was not long before Hārūn ar Rashid inflicted a deadly calamity upon the clan of Baramika. Also, Hārūn Rashid died in Khurasan and Imam Rida was buried close to him.

We have mentioned several examples of such incidents in our book *Hayātu ʿAli ibn Musa Rida (ʿa)*.

His philanthropy and generosity

Generosity was an outstanding quality of Imam Rida (ʿa). He used to give abundant gifts to the poor. Historians have mentioned several examples of his generosity and philanthropy. We will mention some of them here:

1- He once spent all that he possessed on the poor when he was in Khurasan on the day of Arafa, after which nothing was left in his possession. Seeing this, Fadl ibn Sahl opposed the action saying: "This is a great loss". He (ʿa) replied: "No but it is a great profit; whatever you have spent or used in seeking divine reward and honour is not at all a loss."

The great loss is that huge amount of wealth that the Kings and ministers spend to seek and maintain their personal and political interests.

2- Once a man came to him and said, "I am among those who love you and love your ancestors. I am just coming from the house of Allah; all my provisions for the journey have finished and I have nothing that I can take me back to my hometown. If you can provide me with something that is enough to take me back to my country, I promise to give alms (Sadaqa) with the same amount you have given me to the poor in your name on my arrival so that its rewards go to you." Imam Rida (ʿa) ordered him to sit close to him, and then turned his face toward some other people he was with and continued his discussion with them until they dispersed leaving only Sulaiman Al-Ja'fari and his slave with him. He asked permission from both of them and entered his house. After a while, he came out from the upper door and called, "Where is the man from Khurasan?" He stood up and went close to him. He (ʿa) said: "Take 200 dinars and use it as support for your requirements and journey expenditure and do not give alms on my behalf with the same amount on your arrival. The man from Khurasan bid the Imam farewell and was full of joy because of this favour and great gesture from Imam Rida (ʿa). Then Sulaiman turned to the Imam (ʿa) and said: "May my soul be your ransom! You have shown mercy to this man and granted him some money but why did you hide your face from him while doing that?" He replied: "I did that so that I might not see any feeling of inferiority and humiliation he might have for begging and my fulfilling his needs for him. Have you not heard the saying of the Prophet (s) that the reward of hiding a good deed is equal to seventy hajj and those who do evil openly will be disgraced and degraded. Have you not heard of the word of a poet who said, 'Whenever I go to him for a need I always return to my family full of his gifts?'"

Imam Rida's (ʿa) generosity was purely for the sake of Allah (swt). It was neither for material or worldly interests nor for people's praise.

3 – Once a poor man came to him and said, "Please give me as much wealth as your kindness and generosity". The Imam (ʿa) replied: "I cannot do that". This is because the Imam's kindness and generosity had no limit. Soon the man realized his mistake and changed his

words saying, "Give me as much wealth as my own kindness and generosity." The Imam (ʿa) smiled at him and said, "InShā Allah (God willing) I will do that." Then he commanded that the man should be given two hundred dināars.[1]

These were some examples of Imam Rida's (ʿa) generosity. We have mentioned many more of these examples in our book – *Hayātu Imam Rida (ʿa)*.

His Worship

Worship of God formed the greater part of his noble life which was full of divine light, piety and virtues. Some of his companions have said concerning his worship "I never saw him without remembering Allah (swt): "*They used to sleep very little at night*".[2]

As-Shibrawi while narrating his worship said: "He was always in ablution and prayers. His normal routine through out his nights was performing ablution, praying and then taking a little nap and waking up and performing ablution and then praying until dawn.

His (ʿa) worship, prayers, supplications, *qunuts* and prostrations are covered in detail in our book *Hayatu Imam Rida (ʿa)*.

Wilayatu Ahd (succession to the throne)

One of the most important historical events that took place during the reign of the Abbasids was the handing-over of the position of leadership to Imam Rida (ʿa). This act was a very clever plot carefully planned by the caliph Ma'mun to discredit Imam Rida (ʿa). This type of transfer of power is popularly referred to as *Wilayatu Ahd* (succession to the throne). Of course, this was apparently the transfer of the mantle of the leadership from the Abbasid family to the family and descendants of the Alawis i.e. the family of Imam 'Ali (ʿa), whom they considered as their rivals as far as the matter of leadership was concerned.

1- Manaqib Vol.4 P.361.
2- Sūratu *Zariya*: 17.

People were surprised at this decision. Soon it became the talk of the town. Military generals, government officials, important figures in society and people in general, all gathered to discuss this sensitive political matter. This was because the decision was contrary to the political set-up of the Abbasids who were determined to destroy and annihilate the entire members of the Alawi family. Before this time, they had annihilated their youth and had thrown their children and infants into the river. In addition, they kept a strict watch on their Shi'as. They arrested, detained, imprisoned, tortured and persecuted them in every region and corner that they found them. How could all that hatred and enmity change overnight into love and affection with the confession of their right to the throne and above all, the handing over the highest and most important political position in the government to the Alawis? This was indeed more than a great surprise. It was clear that Ma'mun did not carry out this action because he believed that the Alawis had the right to the throne or that they were more entitled than him, but he did that in order to achieve his personal and selfish political ends. He appointed Imam Rida ('a) to the position of *Wilayatu Ahd* for many reasons and among them are the following:

a. He felt that he did not possess an important position in the Abbasid dynasty since his mother Murajil was a slave and servant of the palace. Based on this they looked down upon him and treated him as an ordinary man while they treated his brother Amin with more respect and honour. In fact, they held Amin with special regard because his mother Zubaida was from the royal family of the Abbasids. Consequently, Ma'mun wanted to silence them by honouring Imam Rida ('a) with *Wilayatu Ahd*.

b. One of the hidden aims of Ma'mun was to downgrade the Imam ('a) in the eyes of the people and show them that he was not a *Zahid*, and did not abstain from the worldly, material luxuries as they thought. Ma'mun's aim was to use it to campaign against him; that He ('a) had lust for power and interest in political leadership, after the Imam's ('a) acceptance of the position of *Wilayatu Ahd*. This dirty politics was not hidden from **Imam Rida *('a)***. Thus, **he laid down some conditions for accepting the position. One was: "He would not appoint anyone on any political position nor remove anyone from it." This clearly**

showed his lack of interest in governmental affairs and thus demonstrated his disgust for power or political authority.

c. A Majority of Ma'mun's soldiers, both officers and other ranks, were Shiites, so Ma'mun wanted to confirm their loyalty and love by appointing Imam Rida (ʿa) to the position of *Wilayatu Ahd.* It would also block the chances of any possible rebellion or *coup d'etat* that might arise from them.

d. Rebellion and opposition against the Abbasid dynasty had already commenced throughout the Islamic world. There were slogans here and there against them. There were expressions of deep solidarity and support for Imam Rida (ʿa), a noble descendant from the family of Muhammad (ṣ). This was a clear sign of the fall of the Abbasid dynasty and the end of Ma'mun himself. The agitators welcomed and supported Ma'mun's suggestion of transferring power to Imam Rida (ʿa), though it was a tactical way of silencing them. On seeing this, they paid their oath of allegiance to Ma'mun with the hope that afterwards he would hand over power to Imam Rida (ʿa). Thus, with this diplomatic maneuver, Ma'mun was able to sail through the political hurdles that he had foreseen.

These were some of the reasons behind Ma'mun's coining of the issue of *Wilayatu Ahd.*

Fadl's Letter to Imam Ridā *(ʿa)*

Ma'mun ordered his Prime Minister Fadl ibn Sahl to write a letter to Imam Ridā (ʿa) hoping that he would convince him to accept the mantle of caliphate from Ma'mun. Following is the text of the letter:

To ʿAli ibn Musa Ar Rida, son of the Messenger of Allah Al-Mustapha (ṣ), follower of Prophetic guidance, replica of the Prophet (ṣ), who safeguards Allah's (swt) religion and is the custodian of His revelation and message.

"O you, who are guided by divine guidance! May Allah's (swt) mercy and blessings be upon you. Before you, I praise Allah Almighty (swt) besides whom there is no other God. We ask Allah (swt) to bless and send salutations upon Muhammad, His slave and Messenger. After this, "I hope that Allah has granted you the permission to take back your right from the hands of those who underrated you by usurping it from you. May Allah (swt) magnify his favours upon you and may

He (swt) make the Holy Imam (ʻa) who inherits the caliphate the rightful heir to the throne and expose your enemies and those who hate you because they fear to see it happening to you" (i.e. your becoming the leader of the people).

Indeed, I am writing this letter to you by the order of the leader of the believers i.e. Amirul Mu'minin, Abdullah Al-Imam Ma'mun, and from me also, with a view to returning your right which had been unjustly usurped. Also, to make sure that it is actually handed to you firmly fixed in your two hands; and to hand over to you all those rights completely and remove the hands of all those who do not have legal rights to the throne. Hoping that Allah (swt) will reward me and make me the happiest person on the surface of the earth, and join me with those who have achieved success and victory in this world and in the Hereafter for doing that. Hoping also to meet the Prophet (ṣ) as one of those who fulfilled his rights, and be included among those who supported and assisted you in achieving your right, so that I might attain happiness both in this world and in the Hereafter.

We hope that as soon as you receive this letter –may I be your ransom– you will, without delay, come to see Amirul Mu'minin, the leader of the believers, who regards you as his partner in this matter; who possesses the same lineage as you. He regards you as the rightful person, most entitled and deserving with regard to everything that is under his power and authority. Indeed, I have done what I could do in this matter with Allah's Will, guidance and the protection of His angels. Wishing that Allah (swt) will suffice and guarantee you a happy return of the caliphate and may He grant you the best grace with which you will be able to reform, rectify and benefit the entire society.

Allah (swt) suffices us and He is the best assistance.

Was-Salāmu ʻalaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakātuh."

All these were efforts made by Fadl ibn Sahl and Ma'mun. They thought that Imam Rida (ʻa) would hasten to Khurasan at the earliest possible, in order to shoulder the administration of the caliphate.

It is interesting to mention here that we have not found any trace of any reply to this letter which had come from the highest authority and the supreme official of the Abbasid dynasty. There is a strong

assumption that Imam Rida (ʿa) did not reply to this letter for he was fully aware of the emptiness of these claims, its falsehood, and the betrayal behind it.

Ma'mun sends delegates to Imam Ridā *(ʿa)*

Ma'mun finally sent official delegates to bring Imam Ridā (ʿa) from Medina to Khurasān. He ordered the leader of the delegation to pass through Basra, Ahwaz and Faris with the Imam on their way to Khurasān and not through Kufa and Qum.[1] This was because both cities were the centres of the followers of Imam Rida (ʿa). Ma'mun also explained all this in his letter to Imam Rida (ʿa). Ma'mun ordered the Imam (ʿa) to be brought through Basra and not through Kufa and Qum because he feared that his followers in Qum and Kufa would welcome him with great respect and honour which could weaken the central power of the Abbasid dynasty.

Immediately, on receiving the command, Ma'mun's delegates hurried to the city of Medina, then called *Yathrib*. When they arrived in Medina, they presented Ma'mun's command to him. The Imam (ʿa) had no choice but to obey that unfair command, fully aware that Ma'mun's request for his acceptance of *Wilayatu Ahd* was only a political drama and a complete betrayal. His main goal was to blackmail the honour and noble image of Imam Rida (ʿa).

With deep sorrow and grief Imam Rida (ʿa) went to the grave of his grandfather the Prophet (ṣ). Tears flowing down his face, like one who has lost hope over life, he made his last farewell visit.

Muhawwil As-Sajistani narrating the manner of the Imam's (ʿa) last farewell to the holy shrine of his grandfather Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) says: "When the delegates sent by Ma'mun to bring Imam Rida (ʿa) to Khurasān arrived, I was in Medina. After being informed of their mission, he went into the Prophet's Mosque in order to bid farewell to his grandfather the Prophet of Allah (ṣ). He repeated the farewell greeting several times crying and lamenting. I went forward towards him and greeted him. He

1- Uyun Akhbār Riḍā (as) Vol.2 P.149, Hayātu Imam 'Ali ibn Musa Ar-Riḍā (as) Vol.2 P.285.

replied to my greeting. Then I congratulated him on the new political appointment that would soon be conferred on him, but he said: "Please leave me alone. Do you know what this means? I will go and cease to be beside my grandfather, the Prophet (ṣ). Then I will die alone in a strange land and be buried beside Hārūn. When Imam Rida (ʿa) was taken from Medina I followed him to Khurasān and remained there with him until he passed away and was buried beside Hārūn ar Rashid".[1]

Visit to the Holy House of Allah (Kaa'ba) in Mecca

Before leaving for Khurasān, Imam Rida (ʿa) went to the Holy house of Allah (swt) i.e. *Baitullahil Harām* briefly, to perform a minor Hajj i.e. *Umra*. The majority of his family members accompanied him on this journey. Among them was his son Imam Muhammad Jawad (ʿa). When he was at the Holy house of Allah, he performed circumambulation, i.e. *Tawwaf* round it; prayed two *raka'āt* at *Maqām Ibrāhīm* (place where there is foot-print of Prophet Abraham (ʿa); performed *Sa'yi* i.e. walking between the two Hills of *As-Safa* and *Al-Marwa*, and then shaved his head. Imam Jawad (ʿa) also performed an *Umra* with his father. When he came to *Hajri Ismāil*, i.e. Ismāil's semicircle next to the *Ka'aba*, he sat down and refused to stand up from there, apparently sorrowful and grief-stricken. Muwafiq Al-Khadim came to him and requested him to stand up but he refused to do so. Muwafiq rushed to Imam Rida (ʿa) and informed him about the condition of his son. He immediately came to him and asked him to stand up and join him. He obeyed his father and stood up expressing his profound sorrow and grief in the following words: "Oh my father! How can I stand up and go while I have visited the house and bid the House a last farewell, knowing that I might never come back to it again."

Imam Jawad (ʿa) had realized from his father's sorrow and grief that this unfortunate event would lead to the end of his father's life.

1- A'Yāni Shi'a Vol.4 P.122 part two.

Journey toward Khurasān

Imam Ridā (ʿa) left the Holy house of Allah (swt) and headed towards Khurasān. On his way to Khurasān there was no city or region he came to or came across without the people welcoming him with a great reception, full of honour and respect. In every place he stopped people would invite him to their house for food and demand that he should be their guest. Imam Rida (ʿa) always thanked them for their warm reception and expressed gratitude for their kind gesture and love.

At Naishābur

Imam Ridaʿs (ʿa) caravan moved fast through the barren desert without being distracted by anything on the way until they finally arrived at the city of Naishābur. The local people there gave him such a warm and official welcome, a reception that had never happened in the history of that city before. He was surrounded by great scholars and jurists led by Yahya ibn Yahya, Ishaq ibn Rahawai, Muhammad ibn Rāfi, Ahmad ibn Harb and others. When those who gathered saw him, they chanted the *Takbir*, saying *Allahu Akbar* (God is great) and *Tahlil* i.e., *Lā ilāha illa Allah* (There is no god save Allah).

The whole atmosphere was filled with tears and loud crying of the people. Thereafter, the scholars and some memorizers of the Holy Qur'an who were present called out to the people saying; "O people! Be quiet and careful. Do not hurt the son of the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) with your actions". All the people became quiet.

Then they requested the Imam to narrate a tradition that was transmitted from his grandfather the Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (ṣ). He said, "I heard my father 'Ali Musa ibn Ja'far saying, I heard my father Ja'far ibn Muhammad saying, I heard my father Muhammad ibn 'Ali saying, I heard my father 'Ali ibn Husain saying, I heard my father 'Ali ibn Abi Talib saying, I heard the Prophet (s) saying, Allah Almighty said; "*Lā ilāha illa Allah*" (there is no god except Allah) is My fortress, whosoever says it enters My fortress and whosoever enters My fortress surely will be saved from My punishment." Then the Imam said, "However, with its rules and conditions, and I am one of its rules and conditions."

Over twenty thousand narrators wrote this noble prophetic tradition. The tradition is called *Hadith Zahbi* i.e. Golden tradition, because it was written with golden ink. The chain i.e. *Sanad* of the tradition is one of the most authentic and it is regarded as the noblest of all traditional chains. Ahmad ibn Hambal said, "If the chain of this tradition is recited over an insane person he or she will be cured of the insanity." Some of the kings of Samaniyya used to will it that this tradition should be written with golden ink, placed in their shroud and buried with them.[1]

Ma'mun welcomed Imam Ridā *('a)*

Ma'mun issued an order that Imam Rida ('a) should be given an official reception. All the cabinet officers, military commanders and important persons trooped out to give Imam Rida ('a) an official welcome.

Ma'mun stood in the front row accompanied by his ministers, members of his board of meeting and others. As soon as Imam Rida ('a) appeared, Ma'mun rushed forward to welcome him; shook hands with him warmly and hugged him. He welcomed him very enthusiastically and warmly. His ministers also did the same thing. Ma'mun had already prepared special accommodation for the Imam; a house furnished with luxurious carpets with servants and waiters who were ready to carry out whatever orders were given to them.

Ma'mun offered the post of caliphate to Imam Ridā *('a)*

Ma'mun offered the position of caliphate officially to Imam Rida ('a). He expressed his readiness to resign and hand it over to the Imam, so he said, 'O son of the Prophet of Allah (swt)! I am fully aware of your virtue, knowledge, ascetic life, cautiousness and worship, therefore in my opinion, you are more deserving and entitled to hold this caliphate than me."

Imam Rida ('a) said, "By being an ascetic I wish to achieve salvation from the evil of the world, and by avoiding the forbidden things I hope to achieve greater divine bounty, and by humbleness in this

1- Akhbāru Duwāl P.115.

world I hope to gain a noble position in the sight of Allah the Most High".

Ma'mun quickly added, "Indeed, I want to withdraw myself from this caliphate and hand it over to you'. Imam Rida (ʿa) knew Ma'mun's wicked intentions behind this offer which were set-off by his political selfish interests. How was it possible for him to resign from the caliphate for which he was ready to kill his brother? How on earth was it possible that he could so easily hand it over to Imam Rida (ʿa)?

In any case, Imam Rida (ʿa) totally refused to accept the offer. He was firm and decisive in his answer to Ma'mun. He said, "If this caliphate is your right, then it is not lawful or permissible Islamically that you should remove the garment Allah has put on you and give it to another person; and if the caliphate was not for you then it is also not lawful for you to offer me something which does not belong to you."

On hearing this, Ma'mun became furious and immediately began to threaten Imam Rida (ʿa) saying, 'You must accept this caliphate.' Imam Rida (ʿa) replied: "I will never accept the caliphate willingly by myself." Ma'mun was certain that Imam Rida (ʿa) was firm on his words and would never accept the position of caliphate unless he was forced to do so. How could Imam Rida (ʿa) trust him knowing well that Ma'mun was from the Abbasid family who had shown staunch enmity and hatred towards the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa), treated them very badly, persecuted and oppressed them even more than the Umayyad dynasty?

Wilāyatu Ahd offered to Imam Ridā *(ʿa)* again

When Ma'mun lost hope of any possible way to convince Imam Rida (ʿa) to accept the caliphate, he decided to make a second attempt, using different tactics to make the Imam accept the *Wilāyatu Ahd*, but as usual, the Imam (ʿa) refused to accept it. Ma'mun continued to force the Imam for more than two months but all in vain. Imam Rida (ʿa) rejected all political offices.

Forcing Imam Ridā *('a)* to accept *Wilayatu Ahd*

When all the diplomatic ways used by Ma'mun to convince Imam Rida ('a) become futile, he decided to use force and compulsion. Finally, he summoned Imam Rida ('a) and asked for his final decision. The Imam ('a) said to him: "I have never told a lie since my Lord the Most High created me, and truly, I know what you want." Then Ma'mun asked, "What do I want?" The Imam said, "Do you guarantee my safety if I say it?" He replied, "Yes, I guarantee your safety." Then Imam Rida ('a) said, "You want people to say that 'Ali ibn Musa never distanced himself from the material world, rather, got so attached to it that he whole heartedly accepted the position of *Wilayatu Ahd* with greed. If he were not greedy for the caliphate, why would he accept it?"

Ma'mun became furious and screamed at the Imam ('a) and said, "You have always been speaking what I dislike. I swear by God to guarantee you security from my anger if you accept the position of *Wilāyatu Ahd*. I hope you do, but if you do not I will force you. If you obey me, of course, I expect you will, but if you don't, then I will behead you." Imam Rida ('a) immediately turned to God in prayers, saying, "O Allah, Thou hast forbidden me to intentionally kill myself. I am now being forced or threatened to be killed by Abdullah Ma'mun if I refuse to accept the position of *Wilāyatu Ahd*. This is the similar way that Your Prophets Yusuf and Daniel were forced and threatened; each and every one of them accepted a post under oppressive leaders of their time for their selfish political interests." Therefore, Imam Rida ('a) accepted the post of *Wilayatu Ahd* under great tension, in a state of grief and sorrow with his eyes full of tears. It was unfortunate for him for there was no way out but to accept the terrible position of *Wilāyatu Ahd* which was nothing but a deceitful political drama.

Imam Ridā's conditions for accepting the *Wilāyatu Ahd*

Imam Rida ('a) however gave some conditions for accepting the position of *Wilāyatu Ahd*. These conditions clearly showed that he was forced to accept the position and that he was never interested in it at all. The conditions were as follows:

1. That he will not appoint anyone to any official or governmental post.

2. That he will not dismiss anyone from his official post.

3. That he will not make any official cancellation of any of their political programmes.

4. That he will not be a state adviser for any political matter directly or indirectly.

Ma'mun was forced to accept all these conditions even though they were against his political goals.

The full text of his appointment to the position of **Wilāyatu Ahd** and details of all the decisions that the Abbasid ruler took, have been presented in our book called **Hayātu Imam 'Ali bn Musa Ar-Rida *(ʿa)***.

Paying allegiance to Imam Ridā *(ʿa)*

Ma'mun held an official ceremony to pay the oath of allegiance to Imam Rida (ʿa). All his ministers, military officers and commanders, important personalities, other prominent government officials and very important persons in the state attended this great occasion. All gathered to pledge allegiance to Imam Rida (ʿa) for the position of **Wilāyatu Ahd**. The first person who pledged allegiance to the Imam (ʿa) was Abbas ibn Ma'mun followed by the Abbasids and then the **Alawiyyun** (descendants and followers of Imam 'Ali as).

The manner of pledging allegiance to him was different from the way the Abbasids were used to. It was the first time they were witnessing this kind of pledging allegiance. The Imam (ʿa) raised his hands with the back of his hands towards his face and his palm facing the people. Then they were told to stretch out their hands for the oath. Then the Imam (ʿa) said, "Indeed this was the way the Holy Prophet (ṣ) used to take the oath of allegiance from the people." This could be based on the saying of Almighty Allah in *Suratul Fath*[1]: *"Allah's hand is above their hands."* It is not proper that the hand of a person

1- Qur'ān 48:10.

intending to pay an oath of allegiance should be above the hand of the Prophet of Allah (ṣ) or that of the Imams (ʿa).

Important decrees

Ma'mun issued some new important decrees on the occasion of his appointing Imam Rida (ʿa) as his *Wilayatu Ahd* which were as follows:

1. A one-year complete salary to be given to all the military men.

2. Prohibition of black garments as the Abbasid official dress and changing it to green because it was the dress colour of the people of Paradise. Allah the Most High says: "And they shall wear green robes of fine silk."[1]

3. That the name of Imam Rida *(ʿa)* be printed on the dirham, dinar, and official state money and currency.[2]

Ma'mun's fear and anxiety over Imam Ridā *(ʿa)*

After appointing Imam Rida (ʿa) to the position of *Wilayatu Ahd*, Ma'mun soon began to feel restless and worried over it. He feared that people would soon rally round the Imam (ʿa) because they individually and collectively, wherever they were, discussed the merits, virtues and the excellent personality of the Imam (ʿa), feeling certain that he was the most qualified person for the position of caliphate. The skilled way in which Imam Rida (ʿa) was handling the post made people realize that the Abbasids were nothing except a nuisance and misguidance. Ma'mun was furious about the whole situation and finally decided to take the following steps:

1. Imam Rida (ʿa) should be closely watched; the security forces controlling the Imam's (ʿa) movements were tightened to the extent that anything he uttered was reported to Ma'mun. The responsibility of this tight security was given to Hisham ibn Ibrahim who was very strict and reported every movement of the Imam (ʿa) to Ma'mun.

1- Qur'ān 18:31.
2- Hayatu Imam ʻAli bn Musa Ar-Riḍā (as) Vol.2 P.306.

2. The Imam's (ʿa) followers, *Shiites*, were prohibited from meeting and listening to his speeches. This duty was handed over to the officer-in-charge of the palace guard, Muhammad ibn Amr Tusi, who was very harsh and used to drive the people and Shiites away with hatred and enmity.

3. Learned scholars were prohibited from meeting Imam Rida (ʿa), thus preventing them from benefiting from his vast knowledge.

Assassination of Imam Ridā *(ʿa)*

At last, Ma'mun decided to assassinate the Imam (ʿa) himself. This he did by injecting lethal poison in grapes that he gave to him to eat, which caused his martyrdom. Indeed the Imam (ʿa) departed after he had delivered the message of his Lord to His servants.

Funeral ceremony of the Imam's body *(ʿa)*

The Imam's (ʿa) holy body was given a great burial ceremony that had never been witnessed in the history of Khurasān. On that day governmental offices, business and commercial centres, schools and markets were closed so that people from all walks of life could participate in the funeral ceremony of the holy body of the Imam (ʿa). Ma'mun was leading the funeral procession followed by his ministers, chief kingmakers, and military commanders, etc. Ma'mun did not wear anything on his head and walked barefooted. He declared loudly to everyone saying, "I do not know which of the two disasters is greater, my losing and missing you or people accusing me of killing you?"

Indeed Ma'mun apparently showed great grief and sorrow over the tragic death of the Imam (ʿa) so that he could free himself from the people's accusation that he was the one who had assassinated Imam Rida (ʿa). However, it was not long when everyone realized that he was responsible for the crime of killing the Imam (ʿa).

The holy body of Imam Rida (ʿa) was accompanied with the slogan of *Allahu Akbar* and *Lā ilaha illa Allah.*

Ma'mun buried him in the grave that was dug close to that of his father Harun Rashid.

The holy shrine of Imam Rida (ʿa) in Khurasan (Mashhad) has become one of the most famous and popular shrines of the infallible Imams (ʿa) that people troop from all over the world to pay homage to. In fact, it is unique among the holy shrines of Islam.

Ma’mun was once asked why the Imam (ʿa) was buried beside Harun? He answered: ‘So that Allah may forgive my father for having his final resting place in the neighborhood of Imam Rida (ʿa).’

A famous poet of Islamic thought Da’bil Khuzai ridiculed this cheap logic and wrote the following verse:

Two graves are located in Tus,

One, the grave of the best human being

The other the grave of the worst

The unholy person is not purified by the physical proximity of the holy one,

Nor the saint tainted by the physical proximity of the impure one;

Each and everyone accounts for his own deeds;

He has two hands; he takes and leaves what he likes.”

With the departure of Imam Rida (ʿa) another door of Islamic knowledge, belief, guidance, piety and generosity was closed. *Inna lillahi wa innā ilaihi rājiun.*

IMAM MUHAMMAD IBN ALI AL-JAWAD *(ʿA)*

Imam Muhammad Al-Jawad (ʿa) was an embodiment of virtue and excellence. He was the most extra-ordinay figure among the people of his time regardless of the religious and racial differences. He received the mantle of *Imamate* at the age of seven years and a few months.

At this early age, the great knowledge he possessed really astonished every intelligent mind. People talked about this divine gift and blessing which made him the genius of his time. It is important to note that while he was still very young, great men among the jurists and scholars gathered round him to seek knowledge. They asked him the most complicated questions which he answered without hesitation, just like any great scholar. Narrators of the prophetic traditions relate that Imam Jawad (ʿa) was asked about thirty thousand (difficult) questions at different times and occasions which he answered satisfactorily.

There was no reason or factor behind his miraculous knowlege except the reason given by the Imamiyya Shiites, that the Holy Imams (ʿa) were endowed with divine knowledge, wisdom and *Faslul-Khitāb* (Decisive judgement). These were God-given and not learnt. God granted them virtues which He did not give any other creature in the whole universe. We hereby, take this opportunity to briefly describe the personality and life of this great Imam (ʿa).

Under the auspices of his father

Imam Jawad (ʿa) lived under the protection and auspices of his father. Imam Ar- Rida (ʿa) never called him by his name but by his epithet *Abu Ja'far*.

Imam Jawad used to send a lot of letters to his father Imam Rida (ʿa) when he was at Khurasan. These letters are a treasure of proficient linguistic and literary eloquence.[1]

1- Hayātu Imam Jawad P.30.

Among the great lessons Imam Rida (ʿa) ingrained in his son was to be generous and kind to the poor. When he was at Khurasan he wrote the following letter to Imam Jawad (ʿa):

"May my soul be your ransom! I have heard that whenever you ride a horse to go out your servants usually drive the horse through the smaller gate. This action is a sign of stinginess so that other people may not receive any kindness. I beg you by the right that I have upon you that your coming and going should be through the main gate of the house, and you should always take with you some gold and silver to give to the needy people who ask for your help to solve their problems.

If your uncles ask you for a favour do not give them less than fifty dināars, but if you want to give them more than that it is up to you, likewise if your aunts ask for your help do not give them anything less than fifty dināars, but if you want to give them more it is up to you. I ask Allah to grant you guidance, so do give alms and do not fear destitution from Allah."[1]

Imam Rida (ʿa) ingrained this noble and generous habit in his son Imam Jawad (ʿa) so that he may serve as a model and guide for the community of his grandfather (ṣ).

Deeply respected by the Prophet's *(ṣ)* family

Members of the Prophet's family paid special attention to Imam Jawad (ʿa) and treated him with dignity and full respect despite the fact that he was still very young. They recognised his *Imamate* right from his childhood together with all its merits and virtues. Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Imarah narrates: I stayed for two years in the house of 'Ali ibn Ja'far in Medina, writing and studying all the traditions that he used to narrate from his brother, Imam Musa Kazim (ʿa). One day we were sitting together with 'Ali ibn Ja'far inside his house when suddenly Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali al-Rida (ʿa) entered the mosque of the Messenger of Allah (s). As soon as 'Ali ibn Ja'far saw him he jumped to his feet and moved towards

1- Dur Nāzim P.315.

him without his slippers and *Aba* (the outer garment normally worn by the muslim scholars). He kissed Imam Jawad's (ʿa) hands with utmost respect. Imam Jawad (ʿa) turned his head and said, "Take your seat, Oh my Uncle, may Allah bless you...".

'Ali ibn Ja'far replied respectfully: 'My master, how can I sit down while you are standing?' After that Imam Jawad (ʿa) went out and 'Ali ibn Ja'far also went back to his companions who were astonished at the way he had treated his young nephew. They remarked: 'You are an uncle to his father and you treated him with such respect? 'Ali ibn Ja'far answered, showing his full faith and belief in the *Imamate* of Imam Jawad (ʿa). He declared: "Sit down all of you. Allah Almighty did not regard this beard as being qualified for the mantle of *Imamate* and decided to choose this young man for it, He placed it in its proper place as He wished, then who are we not to respect the bearer of that position? We seek Allah's protection from what you have said. Infact, I am just his slave."[1]

This narration shows the profound and strong belief of 'Ali ibn Ja'far. He clarified to his companions that the question of Imamate was not something subject to the will of human beings, but a matter that lay in Allah's (swt) hand. He grants this position to whomsoever He wishes among His slaves without considering age.

His ascetic life

Imam Jawad (ʿa) abstained from all worldly material luxuries and enjoyments like his forefathers. He lead an ascetic life and concentrated his mind and heart solely on the divine injunctions of Allah (swt).

Besides the Islamic financial rights (*Huquq shari*) and endowments that were coming to him from many places, especially Qum, Ma'mun sent a huge sum of money to him (in order to get him to himself) which he never spent on his private or personal needs. He used to spend it all on the oppressed and needy people.

1- Biharul Anwar Vol.12 P.117, Usul Kafi Vol.1 P.379.

Al-Hasain Mukari has related the high level of glory and magnificence which Imam Jawad (ʿa) achieved while he was in Baghdad. As a result Mukari took a solemn oath and vowed never to return to his home-town and remain in Baghdad so as to benefit from the good things of life that were available. Imam Jawad (ʿa) was aware of what was in his mind so he (ʿa) turned to him and said: "O Husain (eating) a piece of barley bread with rough salt beside the Holy Shrine of my grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) is preferable to me than this condition in which I am now."

His Generosity

Imam Abu Jafʾar (ʿa) was the best of those who gave benevolent assistance to the poor and needy. He was named *Al-Jawad*, i.e. *the generous one*, because of his excessive generosity. Let's take a brief look at his practice in this area:

Historians relate that once Ahmad ibn Hadid was on pilgrimage to Mecca with his companions. On their way, they were attacked by a group of highway armed robbers who robbed them of all their belongings and wealth. On arriving at Medina, Ahmad went to Imam Jawad (ʿa) and informed him of the incident. Imam Jawad (ʿa) ordered that enough money and clothes be given to him and his caravan and accordingly money and property equal to what were stolen from them was given to them as compensation for their loss.[1]

Atabi narrates that one of the *Alawis* (the lovers of Imam ʿAli and his descendants (ʿa) once fell in love with a slave girl in Medina but unfortunately had no money to buy her so he presented his problem to Imam Jawad (ʿa). The Imam asked him obout the owner of the slave girl. He (ʿa) went to the owner of the slave girl and bought the house, its sourounding gardens and the slave girl from the owner.

After some days the *Alawi* went to ask for the slave girl but he was told that she has been sold to an unknown buyer. He was greatly upset and disturbed. He cried aloud: "The slave girl has been sold!" The Imam (ʿa) replied with a smile: "Do you know who has bought

1- Alwafi bi wafayat Vol.4 P.105.

her?" He said he did not. Then the Imam (ʿa) asked him to follow him and took the *Alawi* to the house where the slave girl was residing. On reaching there he (ʿa) ordered him to enter but he refused because he did not know who the owner was. The Imam insisted that he should enter. On entering he found the slave girl waiting for him. The Imam (ʿa) asked him: 'Do you know her?' He answered: 'Yes, I do.' Then he realised that the Imam (ʿa) was the buyer of the slave girl. The Imam (ʿa) said to him: "The slave girl, the house and its surrounding land and gardens with all the property within them belong to you.' The *Alawi* was overwhelmed with gratitude.

These are only a few instances of Imam Jawad's (ʿa) generosity and kindness to people.

His vast knowledge

Imam Jawad (ʿa) in his early age became the most knowledgeable scholar of his time despite the fact that there were many great and famous learned scholars. He debated with them in theological sciences, philosophy, jurisprudence etc. He emerged victorious in all his debates with them. They all accepted his superiority and merit over them. Just at the age of seven, a great deal of learned men gathered round him to benefit from his divine knowledge, as a result of which he became more famous among the people. Soon his virtues and miraculous knowledge became the talk of the town. This display of his divine knowledge was the most miraculous event of his time.

When Ma'mun wanted to marry his daughter to him the Abbasid elite was greatly disturbed and not happy about it. They requested Ma'mun to allow them to test his knowledge so as to assess his intellectual ability. Ma'mun permitted them to do that. They chose Yahya ibn Akthim, the chief judge of Baghdad, to carry out the task and promised to give him a lot of wealth if he could defeat the young Imam (ʿa).

In one such session, the conference hall was filled with important personalities, ranging from government ministers, military personnel and other prominent figures.

Yahya approached the Imam (ʿa) and said: "May my soul be your ransom! Can I ask you a question?" He replied with a broad smile: "Ask whatever you wish." He asked: 'What can you say about someone who hunted and killed a prey while in *Ihrām* (hajj ritual garment).

In response, Imam Jawad (ʿa) said: 'Your question needs elaboration: Did he kill the animal in *Hilli* (permissible area) outside Mecca and Medina or in the *Haram* (Prohibited area)? Was he somebody who knew the law or was ignorant of it? Was it done deliberately or mistakenly? Was the killer a slave or a free man? Was he a child or an adult? Was that his first time or had he committed such an offence before? Was the prey among the species of birds or other type of animals? And if it was a bird, was it a young one or an adult one? Did he regret over his action or still wished to commit more? Did he kill it at night while in its nest or at noon when it was exposed to the killer? Had he put on his *Ihram* to perform *Hajj* (major pilgrimage) or *Umrah* (minor prigrimage)? Yahya was speechless. He never expected such a detailed analysis could emerge from such an issue, particularly from a young boy like Imam Jawad (ʿa). He felt sorely defeated but could do nothing. The meeting hall resounded with echoes of *Allahu Akbar* and *Lā ilaha illa Allah*.

It became obvious to those present that the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) were blessed with divine wisdom and knowledge in the same way that prophets and messengers were granted wisdom and knowledge.

Imam Jawad (ʿa) intentionally exposed Yahya's ignorance since he had come to examine the Imam's (ʿa) knowledge.

Ma'mun then turned to the Abbasid chiefs and said: "All glory be to Allah for this grace. So, it has been proved that my decision was right. I hope you have now realised what you have been denying."

Thereafter Ma'mun stood and carried out the marriage contract between his daughter and Imam Jawad (ʿa) after his virtues and the vastness of his divine knowledge had been tested by the Abbasid family.

Ma'mun requested an explanation on the issue above from Imam Jawad *('a)*

Ma'mun requested the Imam ('a) to throw more light on the issue that Yahya ibn Akthim presented before him.He ('a) explained it thus: "Verily if a *Muhrim* (a person who has worn the pilgrim garment) kills game outside the sacred ground *Hilli* and it is winged and big, he will pay the price of a goat as atonement, and if he strikes it down in the sanctuary *Haram* then the penalty will be double. If he kills a young bird outside the sacred area then he will pay as atonement the price of a lamb which had been weaned-off milk; if he kills it in the sanctuary then he will pay as atonement the price of a lamb and the value of the young bird. As for the wild animals; if it is a wild donkey he will pay as atonement the value of a cow. If it is an ostrich, he must sacrifice a big camel; and if he cannot afford that then he must feed sixty needy people; if he cannot afford that, then he should fast for eighteen days. If he kills a cow then he must sacrifice a cow as atonement and if he cannot afford that then he must feed thirty needy people, and if he cannot afford that then he should fast for nine days. If it is a deer, he will have to pay the value of a goat as atonement and if he cannot afford that, then he must feed ten needy people and if he cannot afford that then he should fast for three days. If he strikes it or shoots it down in the sanctuary then he must pay double the penalty.

It is obligatory to slaughter the *Hadiya* at Mina if the incident takes place during the time of *Hajj* because Mina is a place where every pilgrim slaughters his or her sacrificial animal. If it was at the time of *Umrah* i.e. lesser Hajj, the animal for atonement must be slaughtered in Mecca in the vicinity of the *Ka'aba* and he must give alms equal to the value of a goat.

If he kills a pigeon which belongs to the *Haram e Ka'aba*, then he must give alms with a dirham and give another dirham to buy fodder or food for the pigeon of the *Haram e Ka'aba*. If he kills a young pigeon then he will give half a dirham as atonement and if he breaks its egg then he will pay one-quarter of a dirham.

Whatever act, besides hunting, a *Muhrim* commits out of ignorance or mistake there is no penalty on him; as for hunting, there is compensation if it was committed ignorantly or knowingly, mistakenly or deliberately. Whatever a slave commits, it is upon his

master to pay the atonement as if the master has committed the offence himself.

If a *Muhrim* shows the where-abouts of an animal and it is killed, then he must also pay for atonement. As for the one who recommits the offence (of a *muhrim* by killing a prey for the second time), after making all the recommended atonement in this world there is another penalty for him in the Hereafter also; as for one who regrets after the action faces no punishment in the Hereafter after making the required atonement in this world.

If he strikes the animal by mistake while it is inside its nest there is nothing on him, except if he has hunted it. If he has hunted it whether at night or in the day, he must atone for it."

Ma'mun ordered that the issues explained by Imam Jawad (ʿa) should be written down. Then he turned to the Abbasid chiefs and said, "Is there any one among you who can give answers like this?" They all replied with one voice; "No! By God we cannot, nor can any judge do that." Some of the people answered: "Oh! Leader of the believers, you know better about these matters than us."

Ma'mun then began: "Don't you know that members of this household (Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa)) are not like other creatures? Indeed the Prophet (ṣ) pledged an oath of allegiance to Hasan and Husain (ʿa) while they were still infants and he had never pledged it to any other human being at this early age. Don't you know that their father was ʿAli (ʿa) who believed in the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) at the age of nine and his faith was accepted by Allah (swt) and His Messenger (ṣ). We have not heard of any other person of that age (i.e before his maturity) whose faith was accepted by Allah (swt), and the Prophet (ṣ) did not invite any other child of his age to the faith. Don't you know that members of this household are descendants who inherit one another and their offsprings possess the same qualities possessed by the first of them?[1]

Indeed Ma'mun believed that the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) possessed a high position and honour in Islam and that there was no

1- Tuhaful Uqul P.452, Wasail Shi'a Vol.9 P.188. Sheikh Mufid mentions it briefly in his book Irshad P.312.

difference between the old and the young ones among them with regards to their virtue and excellent character.

His *(ʿa)* utterances of real faith

1. Firm belief in Allah

"Whoever has strong faith in Allah, He will bestow upon him happiness and joy, and whoever relies fully on Allah, He suffices him in all affairs. Firm faith and trust in Allah is a fortress and no one takes protection in it except a true believer. Reliance on Allah is a safety from every kind of evil, a protection and salvation from every enemy...."[1]

2. Contented with Allah

"Whoever is satisfied and contented with Allah, people will become needy of him and whoever fears Allah, people will love him".[2]

3. Totally depend upon Allah Almighty

"Whoever turns to any being other than Allah, Allah Ta'ala would hand him over to that person (so that he would then control his affairs)".

4. Nobility of character

"Nobility of character lies in restraining oneself from harming others; doing good to one who has acted badly with him; not complain to others but be patient; not do to others what he does not like to be done to him; not defame his brother in the presence of one who dislikes him; be sincere to his brother even if it costs him a lot of expenses and not mind it; and, as a sign of his love for his partner, agree with him more and disagree with him a little."[3]

5. "There are three things that attract people's love. Justice in dealing with people, helping people in difficulty and purity of intentions."[4]

1- Al-Fusul Muhimma (ibn Sabaagh) P.373.
2- Jawhar Kalam P.150.
3- Dur Nazim P.223, Al-Itlaf Bihubbil Ashraf P.77.
4- Jawharal Kalam P.150.

6. “There are three traits that will help to save you from regret; avoid haste - seek advice from others before acting, trust in Allah after taking a decision and do not advise someone openly because it is equivalent to disgracing him.”[1]

7- “Good manners are a sign of goodness, and good comments about him a sign of a good track record; gratefulness (to Allah) is an adornment, humbleness is the beauty of knowledge, beauty lies in the tongue while perfection lies in the wit.”

These utterances contain basic noble principles of wisdom, a moral code of good behaviour which would suffice as a justification and proof of the Imamate of Imam Jawad (ʿa). It is not possible for a young man at such an early age to possess such marvelous wisdom and knowledge that even the greatest scholars of his time could not compete with.

His admonitions

a. “Delaying repentance is self-deceit and prolonging description shows confusion.” To prove that one is great before Allah means destruction; to insist on committing minor sins is demonstrating immunity from Allah’s *Makr* (design). “And none feel secure from Allah’s designs except the people who shall perish.”[2] [3]

b. A man once asked for advice so he replied with the following valuable words: “Maintain patience (always), fear not poverty, avoid passion, contradict your whims and caprice, and know that you are never out of Allah’s watch so keep a check on yourself.”

c. Imam Jawad (ʿa) once wrote a letter to his loyal followers. Part of the content of the letter reads: “As for this world we are in it like a passer-by who is benefiting from every little thing in it; as for he whose wishes are the same as that of his companion, and follows his

1- Al-Itlaf bihubbil Ashraf P.78.
2- Suratul *Al-A’araf*: 99.
3- Tuhaful Uqul P.456.

(way) or religion, then he will be with him wherever he goes. And the Hereafter is the abode of permanent dwelling."[1]

We have elaborated more on the profound knowledge, wisdom and noble character of Imam Muhammad Al-Jawad (ʿa) in our book: *Hayatu-Imam Jawad (ʿa)*.

Assassination of Imam Jawad *(ʿa)*

Imam Jawad (ʿa) did not die a natural death. He was assassinated by Mu'tasim Al-Abbasi through deadly poison. Mu'tasim Al-Abbasi had great malice, envy and hatred for the Imam (ʿa). He used to become furious whenever he heard people discussing the merits and virtues of the Imam (ʿa). Realising that the Imam's (ʿa) grand position and nobility had filled the hearts of the Muslims, he decided to assassinate him.

Another reason to assassinate the Imam was because of the malice, hatred and envy that Abu Dawud Sajistani (one of the jurists of the palace) nursed against Imam Jawad (ʿa). This began to manifest itself after the episode in which Mu'tasim agreed with the opinion of Imam Jawad (ʿa) and rejected the opinions of all other jurists who had gathered to give their verdicts upon a jurisprudent issue meant to solve the case of a thief.

The thief confessed he had stolen the goods he was caught with, therefore, Mu'tasim ordered that he should be confined so as to purify him. He then gathered all the jurists and great scholars including Imam Jawad (ʿa) in his palace and explained the case to them. Abu Dawud As-Sajistani gave his verdict that the thief's hand should be cut-off from the wrist because of the verse pertaining to dry ablution *Tayamum* which says **"And wipe your faces and your hands"** Surah Nisa: verse 43. Some other jurists said that his hand should be cut-off from the elbow supporting their reason with the verse in the Qur'ān **"...and your hands as far as to the elbow,"** Surah Māida: verse 6.

Mu'tasim then turned to Imam Jawad (ʿa) and said: 'O! Abu Ja'far what is your opinion regarding this matter?' He replied, 'O Amirul

1- Tuhaful Uqul P.456.

Mu'minin, they have already given their verdicts regarding the matter. I think it is better to leave me alone concerning a matter in which people have already passed their judgement thereof. But Mu'tasim insisted, saying: 'I swear by God that you must express your opinion concerning this matter for I will not leave you if you don't.' Then Imam Jawad (ʿa) said: "Since you insist and have sworn by Allah that I must talk then I will say that all of them have given a wrong verdict, contrary to the tradition of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). According to the *Sunnah* (tradition) of the Holy Prophet (ṣ), cutting a thief's hand must be from the finger-joints so that the palms are left intact.' Mu'tasim asked; 'Why should it be like that?' The Imam (ʿa) replied: **"**This is so because of the saying of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) that **'Prostration is performed on the seven limbs of the body, the face, the two (palms of the) hands, the two knees and two toes, so if his hand is cut-off from the wrist or from the elbow then he will not have the hand to perform prostration, *Sujud*.' In addition to this Allah the Most High has said in the Holy Qur'ān that "*The places for prostration belong to Allah"* i.e. these seven joints that are used for prostration, and whatever belongs to Allah should not be cut-off."**

Mu'tasim was greatly taken aback with this verdict of Imam Jawad (ʿa) so he ordered that the thief's hand be cut-off from the finger-joints and not from the wrist or elbow, thus ignoring the verdicts of other jurists.

Abu Dawud was greatly upset and furious about this so three days later he went to Mu'tasim and said, "Advising Amirul Mu'minin is incumbent upon me but I will like to tell you something which I know will make me enter hell fire." Mu'tasim quickly asked: 'What is that matter?' He replied: 'Indeed it is a matter of great concern that the leader of the believers, Your Excellency, had gathered all well-known jurists, very important personnel and great scholars for a religious matter in which you asked for their opinion which they gave concerning the matter. Members of your household, your leading officials, minsiters, secretaries, even people who did not attend, were hearing it from behind doors, yet you did not consider their verdict but took to the verdict of a man whom people believe to be the real leader and Imam of the *Ummah*, whom they claim is the best of people.'

Suddenly Mu'tasim's colour became pale. He understood what he meant and said to him "May God reward you for your favourable advice."[1] Thus this jurist moltivated Mu'tasim to kill Imam Jawad (ʿa). Woe to him for this grevious sin and may Allah's (swt) curse be upon him for being a partner-in-crime of assassinating a holy Imam (ʿa) whose love has been made incumbent by Allah Almighty upon every believing man and woman.

Narrators differ concerning the real person Mu'tasim ordered to kill Imam Jawad (ʿa). Some say Mu'tasim ordered one of the secretaries of his ministers to carry out the action. It was said that the secretary invited Imam Jawad (ʿa) saying: "Verily, one of the ministers would like to meet you in his house...," but the Imam (ʿa) rejected his invitation. The secretary insisted employing every means to convince the Imam (ʿa). After much lobbying and insisting, the Imam (ʿa) went. After he (ʿa) had taken the food he felt the effect of the poison and immediately called for his riding-animal and left the house of the minister.[2]

Other narrators are of the view that Mu'tasim gave a lot of money to his niece, Ummul-Fadl, the wife of Imam Jawad (ʿa) and decieved her into poisoning the Imam (ʿa). So she was the one who poisoned him through food.[3]

In any case, the poison did its work cutting through his intestines, causing him unbearable pain. Mu'tasim ordered Ahmad ibn Isa to go at dawn and find out the reason behind the Imam's (ʿa) illness.

Death was drawing closer to Imam Jawad (ʿa) with speed. When he became certain that his ultimate end had come he began to recite the verses of the Holy Qur'ān. He continued in this state until he breathed his last.

With his demise another door of knowledge and noble virtues was closed.

1- Tafsir Ayyashi Vol.2 P.319. Tafsir Burhan Vol.1, Biharu Anwar Vol.12 P.99, Hayatu Imam Jawad (as) P.270.
2- Tafsir Ayyashi Vol.1 P.320, Biharu Anwar Vol.12 P.99, Tafsir Burhan Vol.1 P.471.
3- Nuzha Jalis Vol. 2 P. 111, Manaqib Vol. 4 P. 391, Irshad P.369

The Funeral Ceremony

Finally the holy and the blessed body of Imam Jawad (ʿa) was prepared, washed, shrouded and brought to the burial ground. Imam Hadi (ʿa) did the washing, the shrouding and led the funeral prayer. The holy body was carried in a coffin to the cemetary of the Quraish followed by a large crowd of people.

The funeral procession consisted of goverment personnel, ministers, secretaries, Abbasid chiefs and members of their family and the Alawi's family members mourning the great tragedy that had afflicted the Islamic world.

Finally the holy body was brought to the Quraishite grave-yard where he was buried next to the grave of his grandfather Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far Al-Sadiq (Peace be upon him).

The life span of Imam Jawad *(ʿa)*

Imam Jawad (ʿa) lived for only twenty-five years. He was the youngest Imam of the Ahlul-Bayt (may peace of Allah be upon all of them). During his short life span he succeeded in spreading the true and original Islamic knowledge among the people. May his soul rest in everlasting peace.

IMAM ALI IBN MUHAMMAD AL-HADI *(ʿA)*

Imam al-Hadi an-Naqi (ʿa), the tenth holy Imam of the rightly guided Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) was among the brightest stars of faith and piety. He was a symbol of truth who always voiced the truth in front of the oppressive rulers and dictators of the Abbasid regime. He did not, for any moment of his life let any material interest detract him from the guided path. He always feared Allah Ta'ala above all other things throughout his life. We will take a brief look at some parts of his noble biography.

His birth

Imam 'Ali Naqi al-Hadi (ʿa) was born on the 27th of Zil-Hajj in the year 212 A.H. The whole world was illumunated by the birth of this blessed child. He was born in the village of Basriya. Imam Jawad (ʿa), his father, rushed to see his new holy baby. He undertook the standard Islamic ritual by reciting *Azan* in his right ear and Iqama in his left; besides this he performed *Aqiqa* for him by slaughtering one ram which was the tradition and custom of the infallible Imams (ʿa).

Naming ceremony

His father, Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (ʿa) named him 'Ali in memory of his blessed grandfather Imam Amirul Mu'min, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (ʿa). Consequently he was similar to his grandfather in many things among which are – his eloquence and the holy wars and trials in which he was tried in the cause of Allah Ta'ala. His father nick-named him Abul-Hasan and gave him the noble titles of:

Al-Murtadha i.e. (one who is pleased with whatever Allah Ta'ala ordains),

Al-'Alim (the knowledgeable one),

Al-Faqih (one who is well versed in Jurisprudence), etc.

His upbringing

Imam Al-Hadi (ʿa) was brought up in the distinguished family that differed from other families in society due to its enlightened and noble

manners. The youth of this prominent family used to respect their elders while the elderly also respected the younger ones. Among what historians have recorded in this regard was that Imam Husain (ʿa) had never spoken face-to-face with his senior brother Imam Hasan (ʿa) as a mark of honour and respect for him. Likewise they have also narrated that Imam Zainul Abidin (ʿa) never took a meal with his nurse-maid who was in charge of his training despite her frequent request that they should eat together. He refused to do so for fear of the fact that doing so could be regarded as lack of respect for her. Which noble characters can be compared with the morals and ethics of all the divine Prophets and Messengers (ʿa)?

Imam Al-Hadi (ʿa) grew up under the auspices of his beloved father Imam Jawad (ʿa) who imbued his spiritual light, noble virtues, merits, high values and traits into his little son right from his childhood.

His being a genius right from his childhood

Imam Hadi (ʿa) was a genius from childhood who baffled great thinkers and intellectuals of his era.

After the assassination of his father, the Abbasid caliph Mu'tasim sent for Umar ibn Farraj and demanded that he should go to Medina and choose a teacher for Imam Hadi (ʿa), who was at that time six years and some months old, He stressed the fact that the teacher must be somebody who had great hostility and hatred for the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) thinking that by doing so they might inculcate into Imam Hadi's (ʿa) mind an inclination towards them, not knowing that the pious and holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) have special divine gifts from Allah Ta'ala which He bestows upon His servants after He has purified them with a thorough purification from any filth or indecency.

When Umar ibn Farraj arrived in Medina he met the governor of Medina and informed him of his task. He directed him to Al-Junaidi who hated and disliked the *Sa'adat* very much, particularly the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) among the descendants of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (ʿa), so he sent for him and conveyed the order of Mu'tasim. Al-Junaidi accepted the contract. They agreed upon his monthly salary for the task. After that Umar ordered Al-Junaidi not to allow any of the Shiites i.e. the followers of Imam Hadi (ʿa), to meet him or have any

contact with him, that is, they should not send letters and messages to him, so Junaid started his duty of teaching the Imam (ʿa) who had inherited the genius of his grandfather. His being a genius surprised everyone. One day, Muhammad ibn Ja'far asked al-Junaidi: "How is the child you teach?" Al-Junaidi retorted sharply: "You call him a child and not an adult? I swear by Allah I do not know of anyone who is more knowledgeable than me in Medina in Arab literature and general knowledge. By God, whenever I mention one point or a letter concerning a topic which I think I know thoroughly he opens the gates of more knowledge from which I derive much benefit. People assume I have taught him, but by God, I am the one who has learned from him."

After some days Muhammad ibn Ja'far again met Al-Junaidi and asked him: 'How is the little child?' Al-Junaid retorted: "Please do not call him a little child. By God, he is the best and the most excellent of all creatures that God has ever created. One day he sought permission to enter my room and I said: 'You may enter the room on the condition that you recite the Holy Qur'an for me.' He asked "What verse do you wish me to read? I intentionally mentioned some very difficult chapters which I felt he would not be able to recite, but to my surprise he recited the verses and the chapters with such eloquence and beauty that I had never heard before. It was more beautiful, I think, than Prophet Dawud's (ʿa) melodious voice. He is a memoriser of the Holy Qur'an from its first letter to the last and he knows all its inward *Ta'wil* interpretation and reasons behind the revelations *Asbabul Nuzul*. To the best of my knowledge, he is a little child who has grown up in a dark corner of Medina city. Who then has given him such vast knowledge? Oh glorious God, it's really wonderful!"

With this Al-Junaidi's hatred against the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) turned into great love and loyalty for them.[1]

There cannot be any reason for this reality except the Shiites's belief that Allah Almighty has endowed the Holy infallible Imams (ʿa) with

1- Hayatu-Imam 'Ali Al-Hadi (as) P. 24 – 26.

divine knowledge, wisdom, eloquence and virtues which He has not granted any other being in the entire universe.

Alawi's great respect for him

Imam Hadi (ʿa) was highly respected and honoured by the *Alawis* i.e. the descendants of Imam 'Ali Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa) and his followers, who recognised his grand spiritual position and believed that obedience to him is obligatory upon us.

Narrators of the prophetic traditions have informed us about Zaid, the son of Imam ibn Ja'far (ʿa) who was an old man at the time of Imam Hadi (ʿa). Once he went to meet the Imam (ʿa), entered the room and sat respectfully before him. Another time, he came to visit him while he was absent so he sat and waited. As soon as he saw the Imam (ʿa) arrive he leapt to his feet and made him sit on the seat he was occupying, and quickly seated himself in front of him despite the fact that Imam Hadi (ʿa) was still very young. He sat respectfully and obediently just like a student would sit before his teacher. This was a clear indication that a Holy Imam (ʿa) occupies a very grand divine position and that obedience to them is obligatory.[1]

This kind of respect and honour towards Imam Hadi (ʿa) was not limited to the Alawis only, but all classes of people in society showed similar respect to the Imam. Muhammad ibn Hasan Al-Askari, in his narration reported: "Once I was standing with my father at the gate of the palace of Mutawakkil. Many people from other clans such as Tabibi, Abbasi, Ja'fari etc. were also present in the gathering. While we were standing, Abul-Hasan Imam Hadi (ʿa) came into the palace. Everybody stood up as a mark of respect for him until he entered the palace. Some people who were envious of this act remarked with annoyance: 'Why should we stand for this young boy? He is neither the most honourable of us nor the eldest. By God we will not stand up in respect for him when he comes out... A believer called Abu Hashim Al-Ja'fari said to him: By God, we will all stand up in respect for him." Thereafter the Imam (ʿa) came out of the palace. Suddenly, the people's voice echoed with the cries of *Allahu Akbar,* and *Lā*

1- Hayatu Imam 'Ali Al-Hadi (as) P.26.

ilaha illa Allah and they all stood up in his honour... Then Abu Hashim turned to those people and said, 'Didn't you say that you would not stand up in respect for him?' They could not conceal their amazement about the Imam (ʿa) so they said: 'By God, we could not control ourselves until we stood up in respect for him; in fact, we did not know when we stood up for him.'[1]

That was how the great personality of Imam (ʿa) filled the minds of the people with respect and honour. His greatness did not emerge as a result of authority or leadership, but from his obedience to Allah Ta'ala and abstinence from the material world.

Among the things which manifested his great personality was that whenever he came to the palace of Mutawakkil the tyrant, every person in the palace wished to serve him to show his respect and honour; for example; they used to vie with one another to pull the curtains aside and open the door for him.[2]

His generosity

Imam Hadi (ʿa) was extremely generous in giving gifts and being kind to people. Here are some examples of his generosity:

1- Ishaq Al-Jalian said, "I once bought many goats for Abul-Hasan Al-Hadi (ʿa) on *Tarwiya*[3] days but he distributed them among his relatives.[4] Once a delegation of some prominent members of his Shiites came to him among whom were Abu Umar Usman ibn Saeed, Ahmad ibn Ishaq Al-Ashari, and 'Ali ibn Ja'far Al-Hamdani. Ahmad ibn Ishaq mentioned the great debt on him. Imam Hadi (ʿa) turned to his secretary Amr and said to him: "Give him thirty thoundand dinars and thirty thousand to 'Ali ibn Ja'far. He also gave his secretary the same amount.

Ibn Shar-Ashub commented on this noble act of generosity: 'This is something that nobody can do except Kings, and so far we have

1- Biharu Anwar Vol.13 P.131, A'yab Shi'a Vol.4 P.275 2nd part.
2- Biharu Anwar Vol.13 P.129.
3- The 3 days that the obligatory rituals of Hajj are performed i.e. Arafat, staying the night at Mina, etc.
4- Hayatu-Imam Al-Hadi (as) P.243.

not heard of such a great amount being given by anybody.'[1] Imam Hadi (ʿa) made life easy for the people and the best of all gifts is that which lasts long.

2. Abu Hashim once mentioned his financial constraints to him. The Imam (ʿa) wished to relieve him of his problem, so he asked him: Oh Aba Hashim! "Which of the bounties of Allah upon you do you wish to thank Him for?! Should Allah grant you a faith which would protect your body from Hellfire, or bless you with good health that would assist you in obeying Allah Ta'ala, or grant you contentment that would protect you from excessiveness." Then the Imam (ʿa) ordered that he should be given one hundred dinars.[2]

Working on his farm

Imam Al-Hadi (ʿa) used to work on his farm to earn a livelihood for his family. ʿAli ibn Hamza narrated that: 'I saw Abul-Hasan (ʿa) the third, working on his land perspiring profusely, so I said to him; May I be your ransom, where are your male servants? The Imam (ʿa) replied to this arrogant remark by saying: "Indeed somebody who is better than me and my father has worked with spades and hoes on his farm."

"Who is that person?!"

He answered: "The Messenger of Allah (ṣ), Amirul Mu'minin my grandfather, and my father, all worked with their hands, and this has been the practice of Prophets, Messengers, Trustees and the pious servants of Allah."[3]

In our book, *Al-Amal wa Huququl-Amil* (i.e. working and the rights of the worker) we have mentiond other examples depicting the significance of work and it being the way and practice of the prophets and the righteous people.

1- Al-Manaqib Vol.4 P.441.
2- Amali Saduq P.498.
3- Hayatu-Imam Al-Hadi (as) P.46.

His ascetic life

Imam Al-Hadi (ʿa) abstained from the luxuries of this material world and never attached any importance to it. He preferred divine obedience over all things. Concerning this, a narrator said: His houses in Medina and Samarra were without any furniture. Once Mutawakkil's police came to his house unexpectedly and searched his house thoroughly but did not find any worldly items of luxury. They found Imam Hadi (ʿa) in a closed room wearing a robe made of wool and feathers stitting on the bare ground of sand and gravel without a mat or carpet."

Ibn Sabti ibn Jauzi said, Imam Hadi (ʿa) was never inclined towards the luxuries of the world but always stayed in the mosque. When his house was searched they found nothing except copies of the Holy Qur'ān, prayer books and text books on various subjects.

Imam Hadi (ʿa) lived the exemplary life of his grandfather Imam 'Ali, Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa) who was the most ascetic of all men. He had divorced the world three times so that there was no return. During his reign, he never benefited from even the least of its pleasures. He was said to have tied his stomach with a stone to protect him against acute hunger. His slippers and belt were made of fibres which he had woven himself. It was this path that Imam Hadi (ʿa) followed.

His knowledge

Imam Al-Hadi (ʿa) was the most learned of the scholars of his time who had a great intellectual standing in all branches of knowledge and education.

Great jurists and scholars unanimously agreed to return to him as the final authority in complicated and ambiguous issues Islamic practical laws. Even Mutawakkil, a stanch enemy of the Imam (ʿa) and his ancestors used to return to him in difficult problems of Islamic law. Imam Hadi's (ʿa) verdicts were given priority and considered as final. The following are some of the issues in which Mutawakkil returned to Imam Hadi (ʿa):

1. Mutawakkil had a favourite Christian secretary who he always addressed by his nickname, Abu Nuh. Some of the palace jurists protested and said that it was not lawful for a Muslim to nickname a

non-Muslim and call him by the nickname while others argued that it was right and lawful according to Islam. Mutawakkil sought the verdict of Imam Hadi (ʿa). He (ʿa), wrote the following verse of the Quran in reply: 'Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim, **"Perish will the two hands of Abi Lahab and surely he himself will also perish."'**[1]

Imam Hadi (ʿa) thus justified and supported his claim that it was lawful to call non-Muslims by a nick-name, and Mutawakkil was delighted with his verdict.

2. Once Mutawakkil fell ill. He vowed that if Allah cured him of his disease he would give a lot of dinars as alms (to the poor). After sometime Allah cured him. He was confused about the exact amount that would be equivalent to *a lot of dinar*s. The jurists offered divergent opinions, so Mutawakkil sought Imam Hadi (ʿa) for a verdict on the issue. He replied that he must give out eight-three (83) dinars. The scholars were surprised by this verdict and demanded that Mutawakkil should ask the Imam for the source of his verdict. The Imam (ʿa) answered: "Allah Almighty has decreed: **"Truly Allah has given victory on battlefields so many times…"**[2] Our family sources narrate that all the military missions that took place during the life time of the Prophet (ṣ) were eight-three (83).[3]

At the end of his reply, the Imam (ʿa) added, "In as much as the leader of the faithful increases in his good deeds the more beneficial it is for him both in this world and in the hereafter."[4]

3. Once a Christian who had raped a Muslim woman was brought to Mutawakkil and he wanted to implement the Islamic legal punishment i.e. *Hadd* on him, when suddenly the Christian man proclaimed Islam (after the judgment). Yahya ibn Akthim said: 'His new faith has done away with his disbelief and the crime he committed.' However, other jurists opposed this and passed their verdict that he should be punished with *Three Hudud*[5] and some

1- Suratul *Masad*: 1.
2- Suratul-*Tauba*: 25.
3- Tarikhul-Islam Li-Zahbi, Rijal Tabaqa Sadisa wa Ishirin, Tazkira Khawas P.360.
4- Al-Muntazim Vol.12 P.26.
5- Punishments

others opposed that. So, Mutawakkil placed the case before Imam Hadi (ʿa), seeking his verdict on the matter. The Imam said (ʿa): "He must be beaten to death." Yahya and the other jurists objected to this verdict and claimed that there was nothing like that in the Qur'ān and the tradition of holy Prophet (ṣ). So Mutawakkil sent a letter to the Imam (ʿa) saying: 'The Muslim jurists have opposed your verdict and say that neither the *Sunnah* nor the Qur'ān supports it; so, please explain the basis of your verdict.

The Imam (ʿa) quoted the following holy verse: **"And when they saw our punishment they said, We believe in Allah alone and we reject all that which we used to associate with Him. But their faith could not profit them at the time when they saw our punishment…"**[1]

Thus, Mutawakkil accepted the Imam's (ʿa) verdict and acted upon it.[2]

His *(ʿa)* luminous words

1. "The doer of virtue is better than the virtue itself; he who expresses beauty is more beautiful than beauty itself; he who acts upon knowledge is better than the knowledge itself..."

2. "Degradation or debasement is the price for one who does not recognise people's value".

What a noble statement. Verily, the best punishment for someone who does not know the value of a human being and treats people with contempt is disgrace.

3. " Bad behaviour is the worst disease."

4. "Ignorance and niggardliness are the most blameworthy of all evil characters." They are the worst of human weaknesses for they distance man from his Lord and consequently make him live the life of wild animals."

1- Suratu *Mu'min*: 85.
2- Sharih Shafiiya Abi Firas Vol.2 P.167.

5. "Showing ingratitude towards a favour is a sign of arrogance which can cause the favour to end."

6. "Unnecessary debate or argument can sour old friendships and untie the bonds that had been firmly tied. The least you can expect from it is a feeling of success or failure and the feeling of success becomes the base for dissension..."[1]

Mutawakkil invited ibn Sakkit to test Imam Hadi *(ʿa)*

Mutawakkil requested a great and famous scholar Ya'kub ibn Ishaq, known as ibn Sakkit, to throw a very difficult question at Imam Hadi (ʿa) which if he failed to answer would ensure his (ʿa) disgrace and their success in exposing his incapability, lack of knowledge and average intelligence.

Sakkit began to search for a very complicated issue and finally found one. He came to Imam Hadi (ʿa) and threw the question at him. Mutawakkil had annouced an official session in his palace and invited many people from all classes of society. Ibn Sakkit came forward and stood in front of Imam Hadi (ʿa). He asked: 'Why did Allah send Musa (ʿa) with the miracle of the *Asa* (walking stick) and white shining hand; Isa (ʿa) with the miracle of curing night-blindness and leprosy and the capacity of raising the dead; and Muhammad (ṣ) with the Qur'ān and sword?

Imam Hadi (ʿa) replied: "Allah Almighty sent Musa (ʿa) with the stick and white shinning hand because during the time of Musa (ʿa) majic was the order of the day and most of the people were magicians, so he came to overpower their magic and establish a proof against them. He sent Isa (ʿa) with the miracle of healing the blind and leper and bringing the dead back to life because at that time medical healing and pharmacy were the order of the day and most of the people were medical doctors, so he came with what was superior to all their achievements to hold it as a proof against them. Allah Ta'ala (swt) sent Muhammad (ṣ) with the Qur'ān and sword because during his time poetry and war were the order of the day. Most of the

1- Hayatu-Al-Imam Hadi (as) P.158 – 160.

people were poets so Muhammad (ṣ) came with the Qur'ān and sword which were far superior to their poetic skills and swords, to establish a proof against them."

Ibn Sakkit asked the Imam (ʿa) to justify his claim. The Imam (ʿa) replied: "The Proof, *Hujja* was the intellect or wit through which a liar against Allah could be identified and his lies rejected."

Ibn Sakkit became speechless and discontinued his argument with the Imam (ʿa).

Yahya ibn Aktham announced the defeat of ibn Sakkit to the audience which ibn Sakkit admitted thus: "Indeed, ibn Sakkit is not competent to debate with the Imam (ʿa) for he (i.e. himself) only knows the rules of grammer, poetry and literature."[1]

Indeed Imam Hadi (ʿa) was the most learned figure of his time not only in the field of Islamic law but in all branches of science and knowledge. We have explained in details his intellectual abilities in our book called *Hayatu Imam Hadi (ʿa)*.

His worship

One of the most noble and significant attributes of the infallible Imams (ʿa) was their close relationship with Allah Ta'ala (swt) Who resided in their hearts, souls and words. They fasted during the day and spent their nights in prayer.

A celebrated poet, Abu Firas Al-Hamadani, while comparing them to their Abbasid rivals, wrote:

Their houses echoed with the recitation of the Holy Book

While your houses were filled with loot and arson

As far as Imam Hadi (ʿa) was concerned, no one had seen anyone like him, during his era, in terms of worship, social service, piety and religious devotion.

Narrators of prophetic traditions assert that he had never neglected any recommended prayer without compensating for it (at a

1- Hayatu-Imam ʿAli Al-Hadi (as) P.242 – 243.

convenient time). In the third *rakat* of the recommended prayers between *Magrib* and *Isha'i*, he used to recite *Surah Fatiha* and *Surah Hadid* up to, "And He is the Knower of what is in the heart."[1] In the fourth *rakat*, he would recite the *Al-Hamd* and the last part of *Surah Hujurat*.[2] In some of his *Nawafil*, which he offered in twos, he used to recite *Surah Yasin* after *Surah Fatiha*, and in the second *rakat* he used to recite *Surah Ar-Rahman* after *Surah Fatiha*.[3]

Details about his *Qunut* and supplications, *dua*s, after the completion of his obligatory dawn and afternoon prayers have been mentioned in our book *"Hayatu Imam Hadi ('a)*.

His staying with Mutawakkil

Mutawakkil Al-Abbasi was among the worst enemies of the Ahlul-Bayt ('a) and well known for his hatred and enmity towards them. He was the one who destroyed the holy shrine of the leader of martyrs Imam Husain ('a) and prevented people from visiting or paying homage to him. He used to severely punish anyone who visited the holy shrine. Historians assess that he was even more hostile and cruel to them than the Umayyads who were famous for their hostility towards the descendants and progeny of 'Ali ('a) in particular, and the Ahlul-Bayt ('a) in general.

What made him nurse such malice and hatred towards the Imam ('a) were the eulogizing statements of the people for the Imam's ('a). This made him furious and he did all he could to annihilate him ('a).

Evil plots against Imam Hadi *('a)*

The governor of Medina, Abdullah ibn Muhammad was a notorious and irreligious man, who fabricated many lies in order to tarnish the image of Imam Hadi ('a). He wrote a letter to Mutawakkil which included the following:

1- Suratul *Hadid*: 6.
2- Wasail Shi'a Vol.4 P.750.
3- Wasail Shi'a Vol.5 P.278.

a. A lot of wealth was accruing to Imam Hadi (ʿa) from the entire Islamic world with which he could buy weapons to overthrow the Abbasid dynasty.

b. Imam Hadi (ʿa) commanded much love and reverence in the hearts of Muslims all over the Islamic world.

c. The Imam (ʿa) was plotting a mass revolution to uproot the Abbasid dynasty. The governor requested Mutawakkil to arrest and jail Imam Hadi (ʿa) in order to preempt and defeat all resistance and opposition.

The Imam's *(ʿa)* anxiety over the consequences of the allegations

When Imam Hadi (ʿa) learnt about the letter, he immediately wrote a letter to Mutawakkil denying all the false allegations fabricated by the Governor who harboured great malice against him and convinced Mutawakkil that he had no evil intentions of overthrowing his government. Mutawakkil was convinced that the Imam was innocent and that all the allegations against him were nothing but false.

Mutawakkil's letter to Imam Hadi *(ʿa)*

Mutawakkil replied to Imam Hadi (ʿa). Following is the full text of his reply:

"After much regard, Amirul Mu'minin wishes to inform you that he is fully conscious of your grand position with respect to your special kinship that affirms and determines your rights for you and your family. These are affairs with which Allah has made right your condition and their condition and made firm your dignity and their dignity and also granted you and them security. He (i.e. Amirul Mu'minin) is taking all these steps in order to seek Allah's pleasure and to enable him to perform the divine obligation that is incumbent upon him to do for you and the members of your family.

The leader of the faithful feels that Abdullah ibn Muhammad should be removed from his office of governor, commander of the armed forces and leader of congregational prayers in the city of *Medinat ul Rasul* (ṣ). This step has been taken in order to punish him because of his impolite attitude and baseless accusation made towards you as explained in your letter. We believe that his action was an effort to

underestimate your position. Amirul Mu'minin knows that you are innocent and that you did not intend to perform what he has accused you of. In his place, Amirul Mu'minin has appointed Muhammad ibn Fadl to carry out the duties of the deposed governor, and has commanded him to honour and respect you and accept your opinion and decision as final, while striving to achieve nearness to God and to Amirul Mu'minin.

Amirul Mu'minin is yearning to meet you. If you do not mind, come to him and live side by side with him, if you so wish. You may do so together with any member of your family or servants and assistants you desire. We assure you of peace, comfort and security. If you come, you may leave whenever you decide to do so, for you would be free to go anywhere at any time or stay anywhere or leave at any time at your own convenience. If you wish that Yahya ibn Harthima, the slave of Amirul Mu'minin, and all the armies that are under his command to escort and guard you, there is no problem in that, and it is up to you to decide. We have instructed him to obey you. You may do an *Istikhara* (seek Allah's choice) concerning the proposed meeting with the Amirul Mu'minin. In fact, no one from the family and relatives of Amirul Mu'minin has a more exalted position than you, and none among his brothers or children or household or intimate friends are more esteemed, dear, and more praiseworthy, more loved, more honoured and respected than you.

Wassalamu alaikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh."

This letter was written by Ibrahim ibn Abas in the month of Jumadi as Thani 243 A.H.[1]

Imam Hadi's presence in Samarra

Mutawakkil ordered Yahya ibn Harthima to travel to Medina and bring Imam Hadi (ʿa) to Samarra. He also commanded him to carry out a careful research and investigation concerning the allegations against the Imam. Yahya immediately went straight to Medina without branching anywhere. On reaching Medina, he met Imam

1- Al-Irshad P.375 to 376.

Hadi (ʿa) and delivered Mutawakkil's letter to him. The inhabitants of Medina were highly disturbed and worried when they knew about the issue. They expressed their fear over the safety of Imam Hadi (ʿa) because he was the source of feeding their scholars with knowledge, besides distributing alms to the poor and being very kind to them. He was doing all this purely for the sake of Allah and never had any worldly interests. Yahya calmed them down by swearing to them that he had not been ordered in the least to hurt or do any mischief to the Imam (ʿa).

Finally, Imam Hadi (ʿa) and his family left Medina and Yahya attended to him with utmost care throughout the journey. He was amazed at the Imam's (ʿa) piety, worship and ascetic life. The entourage covered a long distance through the wild fields until they arrived at the town of Yasriya. The entourage was welcomed and received by Ishaq ibn Ibrahim there. When the news of the Imam's (ʿa) arrival spread in Yasriya, the inhabitants trooped out in large numbers to welcome and greet the Imam (ʿa). After seeing what had happened in Yasriya they feared that anything could happen, so they entered Baghdad with the Imam (ʿa) at night so that the great number of Shiites there, who had been wishing, longing and anxiously waiting to see the Imam (ʿa), would not see him on arrival, and thus, a mass reception in Baghdad would be avoided.

In Baghdad, Yahya went to meet Ishaq ibn Ibrahim Zahiri the governor of Baghdad. Yahya introduced the Imam (ʿa) to him and narrated the Imam's (ʿa) piety, virtues, religious worship and ascetic life that he had witnessed, to him. After listening to him, Ishaq ibn Ibrahim Zahiri said, "Indeed this man, i.e. Imam Hadi (ʿa) is the son of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). You already know of Mutawakkil's wickedness and deviation. If he hears you saying anything of what you are saying about him (ʿa), which you know he dislikes, he will definitely kill him, so be careful that you do not make the Prophet (ṣ) your enemy on the Day of Judgement…"

Ishaq warned Yahya not to quote any utterance about Imam Hadi's (ʿa) rights to Mutawakkil who was an open enemy of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa). Yahya quickly replied saying: "By God I have not known anything of him (i.e. Imam Hadi (ʿa) that I can deny or hate, and so far, I have not seen any affair of his that is not good and beautiful. Thereafter Imam's (ʿa) entourage left Baghdad for Samarra. When they arrived

at Samarra, Yahya went to meet Wasif Aturki who was one of the most prominent figures in the empire. Yahya informed him about the Imam's (ʿa) arrival in Samarra. Wasif immediately warned Yahya not to say anything about the Imam (ʿa) to Mutawakkil that would make him do anything that may result in tarnishing the Imam's (ʿa) reputation. He also said, "By God…if a single hair should fall from him (i.e. Imam Hadi) nobody will be held responsible for it except you." Yahya was amazed at these words of Wasif Aturki because it was the same advice that the governor of Baghdad had given him regarding Imam Hadi (ʿa) saying that the security and safety of the Imam lay on his shoulder.[1]

In the wretched shack

Mutawakkil commanded that the Imam (ʿa) should be accommodated in a wretched shack to humiliate and downgrade the venerable position of the Imam (ʿa) in the eyes of the people.

Salih ibn Saeed once visited the Imam (ʿa) in that place and came back disturbed and worried about his condition. Burning with the grief and sorrow, he said: "May I be your ransom! They always try to extinguish your light and downgrade your esteemed position, therefore, they have accommodated you in such a terrible and uncomfortable wretched shack.

Imam Hadi (ʿa) thanked him for his love and sincerity. Indeed, he had relieved the Imam (ʿa) of the sorrow and grief that weighed heavily over his heart. Then the Imam (ʿa) showed him some of the miracles that Allah Almighty has supported His friends and His prophets with. These words lightened Salih's fear, restoring confidence and calmness to his heart making the anxiety and sorrow vanish.[2]

Imam Hadi's meeting with Mutawakkil

Yahya hurried to Mutawakkil and informed him that Imam Hadi (ʿa) had arrived safely in Samarra after a comfortable journey. He also informed Mutawakkil of the Imam's (ʿa) simple and ascetic life. He

1- Mirati Zaman Vol.9 P.553, Muriyati Zahab Vol.4 P.114, Tazkiratu Khawas P.359.
2- Al-Irshad P.376.

told him that he had searched the Imam's (ʿa) house thoroughly but found nothing therein except copies of the Holy Qur'ān and prayer books. In addition, he told him that the Imam (ʿa) was innocent of the accusation that he was intending to overthrow the state Government.

With this explanation, the tyrant's anger was alleviated. He commanded that the Imam (ʿa) be presented before him. When the Imam (ʿa) was brought before him he greeted him with full respect and honour. He (apparently) showed the Imam (ʿa) his love of kinship which had bound them together but, unfortunately, (and contrary to his promise) he forced Imam Hadi (ʿa) to permanently stay in Samarra so that he would be under his watch and could monitor his activities.

Mutawakkil demands the name of the best poet

Mutawakkil once asked ʿAli ibn Jahm to name the most skillful poet amongst people. ʿAli ibn Jahm mentioned some of the great poets of the olden days of *Jahiliyya* (days of ignorance) and some Muslim poets of the Islamic world, but it seemed Mutawakkil was neither satisfied nor interested in all of them. Then he turned to Imam Hadi (ʿa) and asked him the same question to which the Imam (ʿa) answered: "Al-Humani[1] says in one of his poems,

"A clan with broad fore-heads and extended fingers

From among the Quraish, who are proud of them

If we are confronted, the call of Nidau Sawami, declaration of "Shahadatain", helps us win over all

You see us keeping quiet but special eye witnesses of our virtues

Keep on echoing in every gathering

Indeed the Messenger of God is our grandfather

And we are offsprings like the brilliant stars."

1- Al-Humani was Yahya ibn Abdul Hamid, a great narrator of Hadith who used to live in Baghdad in 288 A.H. He was quoted as saying that Mu'awiya died as an unbeliever.

Mutawakkil turned to Imam Hadi (ʿa) and asked, "O Abul-Hasan what is the meaning of "Nida Sawami' in the poem?" He replied, "Shahadatain" i.e. (bearing witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah). If I may ask you, is that Muhammad my grandfather or your grandfather?"

The tyrant's anger became obvious and he replied with a voice trembling with anger, "He is your grandfather and we do not deny that".[1]

The tyrant, filled with aversion, hostility, anger, envy and hatred towards him (ʿa) inwardly denied all the virtues and merits of the Imam (ʿa) which he knew and had seen in him, and decided to take the following evil steps against him (ʿa).

1. Attack on the Imam's *(ʿa)* house

Mutawakkil ordered his soldiers to attack the Imam's (ʿa) house and arrest him. They attacked his house at mid-night and found him in a closed chamber wearing a robe made of fur sitting on the ground which was full of pebbles and sand facing the direction of the Qibla and reciting this Decree of Allah Almighty:

"Do those who do evil deeds think that we will treat them like those who believe and do good deeds – that their life and death shall be equal? Evil is that which they judge."[2]

They brought Imam Hadi (ʿa) before Mutawakkil while he was still in that state of spiritual ecstasy. Mutawakkil was sitting in front of a drinking bowl full of wine already drunk. On seeing the Imam (ʿa) he offered him a glass of wine, Imam Al-Hadi (ʿa) was enraged and said, "By God my blood and flesh have never been polluted by wine even once."

Mutawakkil turned his head towards the Imam (ʿa) and said: "Please recite a poem for me." The Imam (ʿa) answered: "I do not memorize many poems." The tyrant insisted and declared: "You must recite a poem for me." Imam Hadi (ʿa) had no choice but to comply with his

1- Hayatu Imam Hadi (as) P.241.
2- Suratu *Jathiya*: 21.

request. Then he recited the following couplets that changed the intoxicated tyrant into a sorrowful, weeping person:

They will descend from their status after a few moments

Of glory and be put down into their graves caves:

Oh what a terrible cave is theirs;

A voice will exclaim after they are buried in their graves;

Where are the crowns?

Where are the jewels?

Where are those faces that were previously covered with pomp and show

With mosquito nets and curtains unfolded before them?

Even the grave will speak when it is questioned and say:

The faces are now scratched, eaten up by the worms and maggots.

They enjoyed delicious food and palatable drinks earlier

But after a period they became old and now they are being preyed upon"

Mutawakkil was aroused from his drunkenness and filled with fear. He could not control himself and burst out crying. He ordered that all the glasses of wine before him should be broken. Turning his face towards Imam Hadi (ʿa) he asked: Oh! Abul-Hasan do you have any debt on you?

He replied, "Yes, forty thousand dinars."

Mutawakkil ordered that the money should be given to him and that he should be returned safely to his house.[1]

This event depicts the Imam's (ʿa) *Jihad* and manner of confronting a tyrant, used to committing all the sins prohibited by Almighty Allah. He did not fear the tyrant's power and empire. He warned him about

1- Miratul Zaman Vol.2 P.960, Tazkhiratul Khawas P.361, Al-Ithaf bi hubbul Ashiaf: P.67.

Allah's wrath and the torture awaiting him. He also informed him of his future after he left the world when his huge army, power of monarchy will not save him from death which is inevitable. He described the condition of his body that will become food for celebrating worms and termites.

One thing for sure was that this advice and admonition fell on deaf ears. His ears had been blocked by the voices of sinful singers, and death overtook him while he was amidst sinful dancers. He never found time to remember Allah Almighty throughout his life.

2. Economic sanction against Imam Hadi *(ʿa)*

Mutawakkil imposed a strict economic sanction against Imam Hadi (ʿa). He decreed the worst torture and penalty to be meted out to any of his followers who sent money or properties of Khums as religious obligatory rights to him. He also banned all kinds of economic transactions or business with him. He warned that violators of this law would be dealt with mercilessly. For this reason Imam Hadi (ʿa) and other descendants of Imam 'Ali's (ʿa) family, *Alawis* experienced serious economic hardship during the days of Mutawakkil. His followers refrained from paying their religious rights because of the fear of the despotic ruler. Some of them devised a means for paying their rights to the Imam by inserting their portion inside cooking oil and then selling it to the Imam (ʿa). The authorities were not aware of this strategy and because of this, some of the Imam's (ʿa) followers and friend were known as *Adihaniun* i.e. sellers of cooking oil.[1]

3. Detention of Imam Hadi *(ʿa)*

The tyrannical Mutawakkil ordered that Imam Hadi (ʿa) should be arrested and imprisoned. He remained in prison for some time.

Once when Saqr ibn Abi Daif came to visit him in prison, the gatekeeper in-charge welcomed him respectfully for he knew that Saqr was one of the Shiites of the Imam (ʿa). He asked him: "What is your purpose for coming here?" Saqr replied: "For good." The gatekeeper said: "May be you have come to ask about the condition

1- Hayatu Imam Hadi (as) P.262 to 264.

of your master." Saqr answered: "My master is Amirul Mu'minin (i.e. Mutawakkil)." The gatekeeper smiled and said: "Shut up! Your real master is the truth (i.e. Imam Hadi (ʿa)). Do not be afraid, I also follow your school of thought." Saqr then said *Alhamdu lillah*. Then he asked again: "Do you wish to meet him?" "Yes, of course." Saqr replied. Then he said, "Take a seat until the mail carrier goes out."

When the mail carrier went out, the gatekeeper said to his subordinate: "Please take Saqr to the room of that *Alawi* who was arrested and let both of them be alone." The subordinate complied with the order and brought Saqr to the Imam's (ʿa) room. The Imam (ʿa) was sitting on a mat made of date leaves and before him was a grave that was dug with the order of Mutawakkil to intimidate and frighten the Imam (ʿa) with it. The Imam (ʿa) turned his face towards Saqr and said, "Oh my dear Saqr, what has brought you here?" Saqr answered: "I have come just to inquire about your condition." Then Saqr burst into tears and wept bitterly for fear of the Imam's safety. The Imam (ʿa) said to him, "Oh Saqr, don't cry they will not be able to harm me in the least." With these words, he calmed him down and expressed gratitude to God. Thereafter, he asked some religious problems to which the Imam provided answers, and then he took permission to leave, bidding him a heart-felt farewell.[1]

Imam's *(ʿa)* prayer against Mutawakkil

Imam Hadi (ʿa) was really pushed to the wall and could no longer tolerate the atrocities Mutawakkil committed against him. He complained to Allah Almighty and prayed the supplication of the oppressed against the oppressor. The supplication is highly esteemed; it is regarded as one of the sublime treasures among the supplications of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) We have mentioned this prayer in our book: *Hayatu Imam Hadi (ʿa)*, and there is no need for mentioning it here again. Interested readers may refer to it.

1- Hayatu Imam Hadi (as) P.263 to 264.

Imam Hadi *(ʿa)* predicted the death of Mutawakkil

Mutawakkil tried his best to blackmail and degrade the position of Imam Hadi (ʿa) in the eyes of the people. He disallowed all people from going to him (ʿa) and they obeyed. Once, it was very hot and the Imam (ʿa) was sweating profusely, when Zurqa, the door attendant of Mutawakkil's palace sighted him. He rushed to him and got him seated in a room. He took out a handkerchief and cleaned the Imam's (ʿa) sweat with it, seeking a way of minimising the harship of the Imam's (ʿa) terrible conditions. He said, "It is a pity that the son of your uncle should do this to you…" The Imam (ʿa) replied: "Please keep quiet." Thereafter he recited the words of Allah Almighty: **"Enjoy yourself in your houses for three days, this is the promise (of your Lord) that can never be denied."**[1]

Zurqa had a Shia friend with whom he used to joke very much. He sent for him when he reached home. When he came, he informed him of what he had heard from Imam Hadi (ʿa). His face changed and he said to him: "Please take care and collect all your belongings because Mutawakkil will die or be murdered after three days." Zurqa was seriously moved by his utterances. He thought: "There is no harm in withdrawing all my belongings if he really was going to die, and even if nothing happened to him, I will have taken the necessary precautions. Then I rode my horse to Mutawakkil's palace, and took out all my belongings and wealth and entrusted them to somebody I knew very well. And three days did not elapse before Mutawakkil died." This was a major fact that guided Zurqa to embrace and believe in the Imamiyya school of thought and come close to the Imam (ʿa).[2]

Death of Mutawakkil

Mutawakkil did not live for more than three days after Imam Hadi (ʿa) predicted his death. He met his doom at the hand of his son Al-Muntasir who plotted his assassination with the help of some Turks. Some Turks attacked him on Tuesday night, the 4th of Shawwal 247

1- Suratu *Hud*: 65.
2- Hayatu Imam 'Ali Hadi (as) P.265

A.H.[1] The gang was led by a man called Baqir Turkey. They entered Mutawakkil's bedroom silently, unsheathed their swords and attacked him while he was heavily drunk.

Al-Fath ibn Khaqan was with him. He screamed; "Woe to you all, this is Amirul Mu'minin, what are you doing? They paid no heed to him. Al-Fath threw himself over Mutawakkil in order to protect him but that could not save him and he became a victim with him. The swords of the Turks cut both their bodies into pieces so that the flesh of Mutawakkil could not be differentiated from that of Al-Fath. Some of their flesh fell into the vessels of wine lying around. Finally, the corpses of Mutawakkil and Al-Fath were buried together in one grave. With this horrible event, the period and power of Mutawakkil, who was one of the most brutal enemies of the Ahlul-Bayt ('a), came to an end.

Recalling Mutawakkil a famous poet Ibrahim ibn Ahmad Al-Asadi recited the following couplets:

This is always the way of the death of so-called great men indulging in flute, women and drops of wine;

There were two glasses that were always fully filled, glass of delicacy and glass of death.

He always woke up in bliss till death came which was destined by God as he fell asleep

Death has many levels that are different from one another

And in the tip of the sword is the death of great men

He himself never knew that the angel of death could deliver many diseases and calamities

He feared the pitch of dark night, but sharp swords ripped his body!

With these couplets, the poet mourned for him. The couplets depict his love of luxury. Death overtook him while he was jesting, enjoying himself with glasses of wine and musical instruments. All the

1- Tarikh ibn Kathir Vol.10 P.249, Raudatul A'ayan P.108.

diseases he was suffering from did not prevent him from all these activities. Swords of the Turks harvested his body while he could not endure pain, except a little. These poets used to mourn the death of their kings because of what society would lose in social welfare development, social justice, security, peace and stability.

In any case, that nightmare for the *Alawis* and their followers came to an apparent end. Muntasir led the rebellion against his own father and took control of the Muslim kingdom. The majority of the people welcomed and accepted his new government.

After he had taken control of the mantle of leadership, unlike his father, he showed much kindness to the *Alawis*. Among other things he did for them were as follows:

a. Lifting the ban on pilgrimage to the shrine of Imam Husain (ʿa). This action of Muntasir was welcomed, praised and thanked. His father had prohibited people from visiting the grandson of the Prophet (ṣ) and decreed heavy punishment for anyone who violated the order.

b. Returning the Fadak farmland to the descendants of ʿAli (ʿa).

c. Returning, what was confiscated previously from the *Alawis* of their bequests, to them.

d. Removing the governor of Medina Salih ibn ʿAli who was very ruthless towards Bani ʿAli (ʿa) and replacing him with ʿAli ibn Hasan. He directed the latter to be kind and good to Bani ʿAli (ʿa).[1]

Many poets of that time were very grateful with this kind gesture. One of them called Yazid ibn Muhammad Al-Mihlabi wrote the following couplets:

Thou hast done a favour and good to Bani Abu Talib after they had been maltreated and roughly dealt with for a long time.

Thou hast revived love for Bani Hashim and considered them your brothers after they had been cut off for a long time;

1- Tarikh ibn Kathir Vol.5 P.311.

Thou hast brought peace to their lives so pour Your help upon them so that they forget the sorrow of the past.

If only your ancestors could see how thou hast been kind to them, they would see you as one with the heaviest scale of good deeds.[1]

Muntasir re-united and restored his kinship with the Prophetic family after Bani Abbasid and their ancestors had broken it and scorned it. He discontinued all the threats, miseries, insults, and unbearable pressures that were imposed on them for a long time. However, unfortunately his period was short. One of the doctors of the palace was employed to assassinate him with poison administered and directed by the Turks. Thus, Muntasir passed away immediately. With his death, the people were indeed deprived of much good. His death was a great loss to the people as far as religious freedom was concerned. The autonomy, freedom of religion and kindness that was enjoyed previously, came to an abrupt end with his death

Assassination of Imam Hadi *(ʿa)*

Al-Mu'tamid Abbasi could not tolerate the presence of Imam Hadi (ʿa). This was because the grand position of the Imam (ʿa) had greatly influenced the minds of the majority of people. The Imam was so popular that there was widespread talk of his merits and virtues.

In addition to solving religious problems of the people, his noble character and remarkable dealing with the people was the talk of every gathering, occasion, ceremony and social meetings. This was too much for Mu'tamid Abbasi, so he decided to poison him.

Mu'tamid poisoned Imam Hadi (ʿa) with a lethal and strong poison which seriously weakened his joints and limbs. He could not rise from his bed. Many great personalities and prominent Shi'as visited him frequently during this miserable time. Among the visitors was Abu Hashim Al-Ja'fari who saw the way the Imam (ʿa) was struggling with the bodily pains caused by the dangerous poison. He could not bear it, and burst into tears. Weeping, he recited the following couplets:

1- Murujul Zahab Vol. 4 P. 83.

The world makes my heart sorrowful and a series of disasters makes all my body feel pain;

When I heard the news that the Imam had become pale-faced due to unbearable pain, I screamed; May my soul be your ransom.

Religion is in pain because you are in pain;

And stars partake in the pain for they kneel down before you.

It is surprising that you should die of illness and disease though you are the Imam and disease is the enemy

You are an effective cure for religion and the world as a whole.

You give life to the dead and living.

These couplets show the intellectual and literal talents of Abu Hashim and the deep sorrow he felt for Imam Hadi (ʿa) who was their divine leader and Imam.

Towards the heavenly abode

The poison penetrated into the Imam's body and death drew closer with speed. When Imam Hadi (ʿa) felt that the ultimate end was at hand, he turned towards the direction of the Qibla and began to recite some verses of the holy Qur'ān. He died while in the state of *Zikr*, (remembrance of Allah)…

His soul was lifted to its Creator accompanied by angels of mercy. The eternal world was illuminated with the arrival of this noble and Holy Spirit of the Imam (ʿa) while this world became darkened because of his departure from it. Thus, Imam Hadi (ʿa) who was the father, the leader, the advocate of the rights of the oppressed people, the defender of the deprived and weak people passed away. May his soul rest in peace!

Preparing the holy body for burial

His son, Imam Abu Muhammad Hasan Al-Askari, prepared the holy corpse for burial. He washed the holy body, perfumed and shrouded it, then stood in prayer for him, while tears trickled down his eyes. His heart throbbed as though it was cut with a sharp blade because of the departure of his beloved father.

Escorting the holy corpse

All classes of people in Samarra came out in troops to participate and share the glory of escorting the holy body of the Imam (ʿa). Ministers, clerics, judges, influential personals, military officers and all government officials took part in the funeral procession. They felt sad for this irreparable loss that had afflicted the entire Islamic world. The city of Samarra had never witnessed such a big funeral procession in which all people, good and bad took part. That day government offices, business centres, shops and schools were closed down officially to enable everyone to participate in the burial ceremony.

His last resting place

The holy body of Imam Hadi (ʿa) was brought to its final resting place while those who escorted it were chanting *Allahu Akbar* and *Ta'zim* i.e. words of honour. He was buried in a house in the graveyard that was prepared for him and the members of his family.

Imam Hadi (ʿa) was forty years[1] old when he passed away on Monday, the 25th of Jumada Thani 254 A.H.[2] With this we come to the end of our study of the life of Imam ʿAli Hadi (peace be upon him).

1- Nurul Absar P.150.
2- Kashfil Ghamma Vol.3 P.174.

IMAM HASAN IBN ʻALI AL-ASKARI *(ʻA)*

Imam Abu Muhammad Hasan Al-Askari is the eleventh Imam of the holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (Peace be upon them). This great Imam (ʻa) was a gift from Allah Almighty to His servants. He was an eminent sign of Allah Almighty by virtue of his generosity, his values and his jihad (Holy wars). We will briefly explain some aspects of his life history.

His ancestry

Imam Hasan Askari (ʻa) is from the family lineage of Prophet Muhammad (ṣ). There is not any other single family on the surface of the earth who has worked and spread the truth among people like the members of the prophetic family.

Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʻa) is the son of Imam Muhammad Jawad, son of Imam ʻAli Musa Ar-Rida, son of Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq, son of Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir, son of Imam ʻAli Husain As-Sajjad, son of Imam Husain, son of Imam ʻAli bn Abi Talib (peace be upon them all).

Concerning the prophetic lineage a poet said,

Family lineage shines over them like the sun that gives light

And like the morning horizon forms its pillars.

A poet called Al-Watri has recited the following couplets in this regard:

What can eulogists say about their attributes?

They are the offsprings of the chosen successors

Memorable shrines of some of them were destroyed

Though they were among the pious chosen Heroes

These were the Holy Imams who were themselves rightly guided. They were lights in the darkness and banners of piety, those from whom Allah has cleansed *all kinds of filth and impurity and purified them a thorough purification.* In addition to that, the Prophet (ṣ) made them the safety Arks {like the Ark of Nuh (ʻa)} as security for the

slaves (of Allah) and the door of *Hitatun* (door of forgiveness) which provides guarantee of security for anyone who enters it.

His birth

Narrators differ concerning his actual place of birth, date and period. Some say he was born in the holy city of Medina;[1] others say he was born in Samarra[2] in the year 230 A.H. in the month of Rabiul-Awwal;[3] in 231 A.H;[4] in 232 A.H;[5] or, in 233 A.H.[6]

When Imam Hadi (ʿa) was informed about the birth of his blessed son, he hurried to see him. He recited the *Azan* in the right ear and *Iqama* in the left ear of the child. On the seventh day of his son's birth, Imam Hadi (ʿa) shaved the infant's head and gave alms equal to the weight of the hair. He also performed *Aqiqa* (slaughtering of a goat or ram) as one of the Islamic rites, a practice that is highly recommended in Islamic law. He named his new son Hasan in memory and honour of his great grand uncle Imam Hasan Mujtaba (ʿa), the leader of the youths of paradise. He also nicknamed him Abu Muhammad (the father of Muhammad). This Muhammad is the name of *Imam e Zaman* (the awaited Imam) towards whose reappearance from long occultation, the entire world is looking forward to. In fact, he is the expectation of the oppressed, weak and deprived people of the world.

His upbringing

Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) grew up in one of the most honourable houses from among the houses of Allah (swt), the house of Imamate, the house sanctified by Allah and kept away from all filth and indecency. Concerning this great house Shabrawi has said; "*What an excellent prophetic lineage, whose glory is due to Allah! As for the grand position of this house, it is indebted to its owners who have excellent lineages and noble origins. They are like a comb with the*

1- Al-Akhbar Duwel P.117 Bahrul Ansab P.2.
2- Tazkiratu Khawwas: P.224.
3- Tarikh Abi Fida Vol.2 P.48.
4- An-Nujumu Zahira Vol.3, P.32.
5- Bahru Ansab P.2, Akhbarul Duwel P.167, Ittihaf Bihubb Ashraf P.86.
6- Da'iratu Muarif (Al-Bustani) Vol.7 P.45.

same flattened base but have many fingers that share common glory and honour. How beautiful is this glittering house, like an abode in the sky amidst the twinkling bright stars!"[1]

His fear of God

One of the most conspicuous qualities of Imam Hasan al Askari (ʿa), right from his childhood days, was his fear of Allah (swt). Historians narrate that a man once passed by the Imam (ʿa) when he was a little child playing with children of the same age and found the Imam (ʿa) crying. The man thought that the Imam (ʿa) was crying because he did not have something to play with, like the other children's toys. The man calmed him down and promised to buy a toy for him to play with, saying: "Don't worry I will buy a toy for you to play and enjoy yourself with." He replied saying: "No, we have not been created to play (in this world)." The man was taken aback and asked: "For what purpose have we been created?" He replied: "For knowledge and worship." The man was even more astonished and inquired: "From where did you learn this?" He replied "From the saying of Allah Almighty which says: "Do you think that We have created you aimlessly?" The man asked: "How have you achieved this knowledge at this tender age?" Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) answered: "Please go away and leave me alone. I have seen my mother trying to kindle fire with big pieces of firewood and failing until she made use of the smaller pieces of wood. For this reason I fear that I might be one of the smaller pieces of wood in Hell fire."

Look at the level of faith ingrained in the soul and person of the Imam (ʿa) while he was still in his early childhood.

Staying with his father

Imam Hasan al Askari (ʿa) spent a major part of his life with his beloved father and never separated from him. Imam Hadi (ʿa) announced the virtues of his beloved son saying: "Abu Muhammad is one of the descendants of the prophetic family with the best of human

1- Ittihaf Bihubbil-Ashraf P.68.

qualities. He is my eldest son and my successor. With him will end the affairs of Imamate and our practical lawgiving."[1]

His worship

Imam Abu Muhammad Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) was the best of men in terms of often returning to God the Most High. He used to fast during the daytime and perform prayers at night. He always remained occupied with the recitation of the Qur'ān and recommended supplications. Muhammad Shakiri says about the Imam: "Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) used to sit in his *Mihrab* (place for offering prayers) and then prostrate, after which I would fall sleep and wake up but I would still find him in the prostrating position."[2] Indeed his soul and spirit were strongly attached to Allah (swt) and never distracted by any worldly affair. Many supplications during his *Qunut* in prayers have been narrated. These supplications portray his deep repentance and oft-returning to Allah (swt). Likewise, many supplications which he used to recite after his prayers (obligatory prayers) have been reported. We have mentioned all these in our book: *Hayatu Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa)*.

His forbearance

His forbearance was beyond description. The Abbasid dynasty once deliberately and unjustly arrested him and imprisoned him, but he bore the miseries and hardships with patience. He never complained about the horrors and the bitterness of the prison to anyone, nor expressed disgust for the tyrants.

His generosity

Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) was the most generous of all persons of his time. He ordered all his deputies who he had assigned as collectors of religious rights (i.e. *Khums*) to donate all the property and wealth among the needy and deprived people. He also ordered them to maintain peace and arbitrate between two conflicting parties.

1- A'ayan Shi'a Vol.4 P.295 section 3.
2- Hayatu Imam Hasan Askari (as) P.40.

Among his great philanthropic acts was the one historians have narrated from Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Ibrahim ibn Imam Musa Kazim ibn Ja'far ('a) who said, "Means of livelihood became difficult for us, so one day my father said: "Come on, let's go to Imam Abu Muhammad Al-Askari. We have often heard of his great generosity. So I inquired, 'Do you know him?' He replied "No! I do not know him. I have never seen him before." Then we left for his place. On the way, my father was murmuring to himself: "How I wish he orders five hundred dirhams for us that would make us independent. We would spend two hundred Dirham for clothes, two hundred for flour and the remaining one hundred for other expenses." I was also muttering to myself, "Oh! If only he would give me three hundred dirhams; one hundred for buying a donkey, one hundred for clothes and the remaining one hundred for other expenses. I would then go and live in Jabul."[1]

When we arrived in front of his door, his servant approached us, welcomed us and said: 'Ali ibn Ibrahim and his son Muhammad may enter with pleasure.' When we stood before him, he greeted us with the salaam and we also replied to him. Then he said, "Oh 'Ali! What has made you come to us at this late hour?" My father answered: "Oh my master! I felt intimidated by you. 'Ali and his son stayed for some time then they requested to take their leave. Then the Imam's ('a) servant came out after them and gave a sack containing five hundred dirhams for 'Ali and said "Two hundred dirhams for clothes, two hundred dirhams for flour and one hundred for other expenses". Then he also gave a sack of money to his son, Muhammad, containing three hundred dirhams and said, "One hundred for clothes and the remaining for other expenses, but instead of going to Jabul, go to Surah."[2] Then Muhammad went to Surah according to the directive of Imam Abu Muhammad ('a). There his financial conditions improved so speedily that he became one of the richest people among the descendants of 'Ali in that city. Historians have mentioned similar

1- Jabul is a village situated around Dajlah River in Iraq.

2- Surah is a city in Iraq that is situated in Babylon; this place was the resident of Suryawi nation.

cases of how Imam Abu Muhammad saved many lives of the poor and made them rich through his openhandedness and generosity.

His knowledge

All narrators of Imam Abu Muhammad's (ʿa) biography unanimously agree that he was the most knowledgeable person of his time and the best of them not only in Islamic religious sciences but in all branches of science and knowledge.

A Christian medical doctor called Bakhtashu once said that as far as he had studied and carried out research, he {i.e. Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa)} was the most knowledgeable in the whole universe. The Imam (ʿa) possessed great intellectual ability which none possessed besides him. This is exactly the view of the Shi'a that the holy Imams (ʿa) of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) are endowed with divine knowledge that covers all types of knowledge.

His excellent noble character and morals

Imam Abu Muhammad Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) was a sign from among the signs of Allah the Most High as far as his greatness and noble morality was concerned.

He used to receive both friends and enemies with a smiling and friendly face. His noble traits greatly influenced some of his enemies and those who were jealous of him. They completely changed and their hearts were filled with affection for him. 'Ali ibn Awtanash was one such person. He was famous for his hostility towards the Prophet's (ṣ) family, but when he met him his attitude changed totally. After that, he never lifted his head in the presence of the Imam (ʿa) to see him face to face as a mark of respect for him. More over he was the best of people who praised him.[1]

In his grand dignified behaviour, Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) was a clear model and manifestation of Islamic teachings and the Prophetic mission.[2]

1- Kashfu Ghumma Vol.3 P.2.
2- Hayatu Imam Hasan Askari (as) P.42.

His *('a)* short wise speeches

Many short and wise sayings have been narrated from Imam Hasan Al-Askari ('a) that express his august guidance and lessons of self-discipline towards achieving high values for mankind. The following are some of those utterances that are reported from him:

1. He said; "You are living in a limited and ever decreasing life span; your days are numbered and death will come all of a sudden. Whosoever sows good will reap good which people would be envious of, whosoever sows evil, will reap remorse and regret; everyone will reap exactly what he sowed. He who moves slowly, his (predestined) share of livelihood will not overtake him; the greedy will never achieve what has not been destined for him; whosoever is given good, Allah is the One who has given it to him; and whosoever is protected from evil, Allah is the One who has protected him from it".[1]

2. "The most cautious of all people is one who abstains from ambiguities; the best of worshippers is he who observes the obligatory duties properly; the most ascetic person is one who refrains from unlawful acts. The best of those who strive in the path of Allah is he who avoids sins."[2]

3. "Verily getting to Allah the Most High is a long journey which cannot be achieved except by waking up at night."[3]

4. "To stay with us and remain poor is indeed better than staying with our enemies and being rich."[4]

5. "Verily as for a child who is rude to his parents in his childhood, his own children will be rebellious towards him in his adulthood.[5]

6. "Real worship is not engaging in much fasting and prayers but much contemplation over Allah's creation or affairs."[6]

1- Tuhaful Uqul P.519.
2- Tuhaful Uqul P.519.
3- Hayatu Imam Hasan Askari (as) P.99.
4- Biharul Anwar Vol.5 P.299.
5- Hayatu Imam Hasan Askari (as) P.98.
6- Tuhaful Uqul P.518.

Among the evidences of his Imamate

Allah Almighty has supported his Prophets and Trustees with miracles which other people are not capable of performing so that it could serve as testimony to the truth of their message. Among those miracles is their knowledge of what is hidden in the minds of people and their ability to foretell future events. It is very common for one to read the life history of any one of the holy Imams (ʿa) and come across narrations where what they predicted really happened as foretold.

At this point, we will mention some of those miracles that occurred during the lifetime of Imam Abu Muhammad Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa).

1. Ismail ibn Muhammad Al-Abbasi said he once complained to Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) of something he was in need of, and then swore before him that he had nothing, not even a dirham or less than that with him. Then he (ʿa) said, "Do you swear in the name of Allah (swt) over a lie while you have hidden two hundred dinars under the ground. I am not saying this to deny you of my gift. Oh my assistant! How much money do I have with you? Please give him something." Then his servant gave me one hundred dinars. Then he turned to me and said, "Verily you will lose your two hundred dinars at the time you most need them." After a while he was seriously in need of the money, so he went to the place where he had buried it and dug it up but it was not there. Later on, he found out that one of his sons had discovered the place of concealment, stolen it and run away.[1]

2. Abu Hashim related: "I was imprisoned so I complained about the miseries and sufferings I was experiencing in prison to Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa). He wrote a letter to me, which read: "Insha Allah you will perform your noon prayer at home today." And that was exactly what happened. I was released before *Zuhr* and I offered my noon prayer at home."[2]

1- Nuru Absar: 153.
2- I'ilamu Wari 372.

3. Abu Hashim reports: I heard Abu Muhammad Al-Askari ('a) saying: "Verily there is in paradise a gate called *Al-Ma'ruf* (those who do good to others). No one will pass through it except those who do *Ma'ruf.* On hearing this, I thanked and praised Allah inwardly and felt very happy because of what I had done of *Ma'ruf* in fulfilling people's needs. The Imam ('a) turned to me and said, "I know what you are feeling. Verily, those who do good in this world are those who will be recognised as doers of good in the Hereafter. May Allah make you one of them, Oh Abu Hashim, and may Allah have mercy upon you."[1]

4. Muhammad ibn Hamza Adauri narrates: "I once wrote a letter to Imam Abu Muhammad Al-Askari ('a) requesting him to pray to Allah for me that I should be blessed with abundant wealth, for poverty had afflicted me and I feared I might face humiliation because of it. Then he ('a) wrote back saying; "Good luck to you, Allah Almighty has given you abundant wealth. Your uncle's son Yahya ibn Hamza is dead leaving behind one hundred thousand dirhams and he has no heir to inherit it except you, and very soon the money will be sent to you, hence thank Allah and be grateful to Him, spend it wisely and avoid extravagance." "It was not long before the money came to me; and the news of my cousin just as the Imam ('a) had predicted a few days back. Thereafter, richness drove poverty away from me. I observe my duty with regard to Allah's right and I avoid extravagance."

5. Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Maimun narrated "I once wrote a letter to my master, Imam Hasan Al-Askari ('a) in which I complained about my poverty. Then I asked myself: Is it not true that Abu Abdullah i.e. Imam Husain ('a) has said, "Living with us in poverty is better than living with our enemy in affluence and that for one to be killed for our sake is better than to be alive with our enemy?" Then the reply came: "Verily, Allah the Most High, wipes out the sins of our friends if they are afflicted with poverty (for our sake) and the sins are connected with poverty, and He may forgive as much as that which you whispered to yourself. Living with us in poverty is better

1- Nuru Absar P.152.

than living with our enemies in abundant wealth; we are a shelter for whoever takes refuge with us; guidance for who seeks light through us. We are a protection for one who seeks our protection. Whoever loves us is with us in Paradise i.e. *Firdaus* (the highest paradise), and whoever deviates from us goes to Hell."

6. Abu Hashim relates: "I once visited Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) in his house and wished to ask him for a stone to make a ring with it so that I could earn blessings from it. When I came to him I sat down and forgot to ask him for it. When I stood up to go he gave me a ring made of Fiss, smiled and said, "You intended to ask for a stone for a ring and we have given you a ring made of it." Surprised, I said, "Oh, my master, you are indeed Allah's friend and my leader through whom I practise the religion of Allah. He added, "May Allah forgive your sins, O Aba Hashim."

Perhaps it is pertinent to mention here that all the holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) could predict or tell what was in the minds of people. Allah Almighty supported them with this miracle as a proof of their Imamate.

This is the faith of the Shi'as and they neither attribute God ship to them because of it nor think it is illogical to be blessed with special capabilities.

His letter to the Judge ʻAli ibn al Husain

Imam Hasan (ʿa) once wrote a letter to a judge who was also a pious man, Abul Hasan ʻAli ibn al Husain ibn Musa ibn Babawaih al-Qummi. He was a prominent Shiite. He was well versed in traditions (*Ahadith*) and jurisprudence and in other Islamic sciences. The Imam's (ʿa) letter read :

"Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim. All praise is due to Allah the Lord of the universe. The (good) end of affairs belongs to the righteous and the pious. Heaven or paradise is for those who acknowledge the oneness of Allah and Hell is for those who disobey and deny (the truth). There is no hostility except for tyrants and oppressors and there is no god except Allah. The best of benediction is upon the best of his creatures Muhammad (ṣ) and the pious and holy members of his household.

After this: Oh my good old man, my trusted one, my jurist, Abu Hasan ‘Ali ibn al Husain al-Qummi, may Allah give you success to achieve His pleasure, may Allah make your offspring pious with His mercy. Be pious and God-fearing. Establish prayer, give alms to the poor, forgive others, control your anger, maintain a good relationship with kinsfolk and others. You should have a good brotherly relationship with your fellow Muslims and others, tolerate their ignorance and try to fulfill their needs both in ease and in hardship. You should study the religion thoroughly, and be steadfast in all affairs, keep your promise with the Qur’ān i.e. not go against its injunctions, maintain good manners, enjoin good and prohibit evil, and establish peace among mankind. Avoid indecency of any kind. Adhere, adhere to the night prayer. Allah Almighty has said: **“There is no good in most of their conversation except in which there is a command for giving alms or enjoining good or making peace among people.”**[1]

“I order you to avoid all kinds of evil deeds and observe the night prayer because the Prophet (ṣ) bequeathed the same to ‘Ali (ʿa) and said, O ‘Ali perform the night prayer! He repeated this three times, and then he said, “Whoever underrates it is not one of us.”

This is my will. Act according to it and command my followers to do the same. I admonish you to be patient, and be prepared and await the *Faraj* (relief) for the Prophet (ṣ) said, “The best work of my people is awaiting the expected one (*Faraj)*, the great relief that will come with the appearance of Imam Zaman (may Allah hasten his appearance).

Our Shi’as (followers) will not cease to be in grief until the appearance of my offspring of which the Prophet (ṣ) has given glad tidings. He will fill the earth with justice just as it has been filled with injustice and corruption. Hence, be patient, my old man and command my Shiites also to be patient.”

Allah Ta’ala says:

1- Sura *Nisāi*:114.

"The earth belongs to Allah. He makes whomsoever of His servants He wishes its heirs. Verily, the end of affairs is for the God-fearing."[1]

And Allah suffices us. He is the Best Trustee, the Best Master and the Best of Helpers."[2]

This letter contains the following main points:

1. Confirmation of the grand position of the religious scholar Husain ibn 'Ali. Imam Hasan Al-Askari ('a) praised him with honourable titles that show his august position. Further more, biographers narrate that he was a grand jurist with no equal, well guided in the affairs of the Prophetic household. He was fanatical in religious matters, exterminator of those who denied the foundations of religion. He was himself a pillar of religion. His level of knowledge was so high and reliable that other learned Imamiyya scholars used to give priority to his verdicts over their own and give his verdict a plausible interpretation if there was an apparent difference between it and Islamic texts (i.e. Qur'ān or prophetic traditions) as was the practice of Shaheed in his book *Az-Zikra*.

2. The Imam ('a) prayed that Allah should bless him with a pious child full of blessings. Allah accepted his prayers and he was blessed with a child. Abu Ja'far Muhammad, otherwise known with the title *As-Saduq*. He was a distinguished Shi'a and Muslim scholar. His merits lie in his great services rendered to the Islamic world. He revived the Islamic laws and documented books of tradition narrated from the holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt ('a). He wrote over three hundred books.[3] Among the most important of his books is *Man la yahduru Al-Faqih*. This book is one of the best and most glorious books of reference for the Imamiyya scholars and jurists.

3. He invites all Shiites to have noble manners, maintain good relationships, tolerate one another, fulfil the needs of others, study religion and be upright in all dealings.

1- Sura *A'araf*:128.
2- Raudatu Jannāt 4: 273 to 274.
3- Raudatu Jannāt: 276.

4. Imam Al-Askari (ʿa) commanded his followers to prepare and wait for the *Faraj,* i.e. the reappearance of the *Qāim* from Prophet Muhammad's (ṣ) family i.e. Al-Mahdi (May Allah hasten his appearance), the expectation of the oppressed people of the world. He will re-establish the Islamic system of government, which will be the extension of the mission of his grandfather Muhammad, Messenger of Allah (ṣ).

Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) has many other letters that he sent to his Shiite followers. We have mentioned them in our book: *Hayatu Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa).*

Imam with the leaders of his time

During his short life span, Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) lived with a lot of tyrannical and oppressive rulers who were out to fight the holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa). He experienced much oppression from these hostile despotic rulers. The rulers who came to power during his lifetime were the following:

1. Al-Mutawakkil

Al-Mutawakkil came to power in the year 232 Hijra. It was in this year also that Abu Muhammad (ʿa) was born. Mutawakkil was filled with awful hostility and hatred towards all descendants of ʻAli (ʿa). They experienced severe brutality during his reign.

His lack of seriousness – Mutawakkil lived a useless life full of colourful parties and merrymaking. Historians narrate thus: 'There was never a time in the era of the Abbasid dynasty in which there was so much laughter, joking and useless fun like that of Mutawakkil. He spent much time and money on corrupt parties and festivals, profligate ceremonies and poetry recitals. The contents of the poems he usually liked to hear and spend upon were not of any quality. For example, he once said to Abu Anbasy: "Tell me about your donkey and her death and what poem she had coined for you when you saw her in your dream." Abu Anbasy said: "Yes, of course Amirul Mu'minin. That donkey was more intelligent than the state judges, for it had neither committed any criminal act nor made any mistakes. Unfortunately, one day it was afflicted with a disease which led to its sudden death. Thereafter, I saw her in my dream and said to her, 'Oh,

my beloved donkey, did I not provide you with cold water and clean fodder as food? Did I not make every effort to keep you comfortable and protect you? Then why did you die all of a sudden? What happened?' 'She replied: 'One day while you were talking to a pharmacist in a drug store a Jenny passed by me who was very beautiful and I was attracted to her. She snatched my heart. I loved her so much that I could not control my longing for her, so I died for her sake.' 'Then I asked her: 'Did you recite any couplets for her at that moment?' 'She replied: 'Yes, I did.' and then recited the poem for me:

"*My heart was trapped by a Jenny in front of a chemist door;*

I was most excited and attracted by her beautiful teeth formation

And both of her long soft thighs like that of Shanqarani,

So I died for her sake

Because if I were to be living my misery would prolong

Then I inquired: 'Oh my beloved donkey, what is Shanqarani? She replied: 'It was a strange, wonderful, beautiful donkey.'"

Mutawakkil was overwhelmed with joy on hearing this nonsense, so he commanded all his singers to form some poems concerning that donkey for him. It is said that he was never seen as happy as on that day. Then he ordered more gifts to be given to Abul Anbasy.'

Woe to that era that gave an opportunity to such a person to be the leader of the Muslim community while people like Imam Abu Muhammad Hasan Al-Askari ('a) were distanced from the political arena!

Mutawakkil was always in a festive mood. He had two slaves who were expert singers. He never separated himself from them. Whenever he wanted to dwell in the arena of liquor, he would first listen to their music. One beat the drum while the other blew on the flute. Mutawakkil had five thousand slaves and according to one narration, he had sexual intercourse with all of them. Some commentators on his biography strongly believe that if Mutawakkil

had not been killed he would have died of excessive sexual intercourse.[1]

People who wanted to bribe him and get closer to him used to present him with very attractive slave girls, golden pots, or a big bottle full of pure wine; these were his favorites.

Al-Fath ibn Khaqan once presented a very beautiful slave girl to Mutawakkil accompanied with a golden cup full of pure wine, the type that he had never seen before. This was when Mutawakkil recovered from his illness. Fath wrote the following couplets that he sent alongside with the gifts:

> "*If Amirul Mumineen is free from disease and now enjoying good health*
>
> *No healer drug but wine, poured in a beautiful pot and a precious ring are good for him after bearing pain.*"

Mutawakkil was very pleased with this poem. At that time, his personal doctor Yuhma ibn Masuweih was by his side. He commented: 'By God, Fath ibn Khaqan is more skilled in medical science than me. Therefore, your majesty, do not ever reject his suggestions.'

We have mentioned in detail, the merriment and festival sessions of Mutawakkil in our book: *Hayatu Imam Hasan Al-Askari ('a)*. If any person needs more information in this area, he may refer to it.

Disobeyed Allah openly–Mutawakkil used to commit sins and immoral acts openly without being ashamed of them. Oneday Justice Ahmad ibn Dawud met him while he was gambling. Fath ibn Khaqan wanted to put the gambling cards aside but Mutawakkil prevented him from doing that saying: 'Should I conduct something in the presence of God and hide it from His servants.'

His subordinates drank wine and played chess before him and he never stopped them. He once commanded his wife to put off her veil and plait (roll) her hair like the slave girls in the palace. She refused.

1- Miratu Zaman Vol.6 P.69.

Instantly, Mutawakkil divorced her. He neither feared Allah nor respected any of the Islamic injunctions.

Hatred for the descendants of Imam'Ali *(ʿa)*

One of the worst qualities rooted in his heart was his hatred for the descendants of Imam ʿAli (ʿa). He conspired to oppress and shed their blood. He enforced stringent economic sanctions on them and prohibited people from transacting any economic business with them. He prescribed heavy punishment and fines for whoever was caught violating this order.[1]

Muslims themselves were afraid to come close to Bani ʿAli because of his tyrannical penalties, so life was made very difficult and narrow for Bani ʿAli (ʿa). Their miseries and poverty knew no bounds. They and their women were compelled to use the same garment to perform prayer. They took turns to pray. They wore tattered clothes and sat on uncovered ground. They lived in very critical conditions while at the same time Mutawakkil spent millions of gold and dinars on his night parties and useless festivals. He used to give huge amounts of money to dancers and singers just for enjoyment and merriment while he forbade even a piece of bread for the descendants of the Holy Prophet of Allah (ṣ).

His hatred for Amirul Mu'minin 'Ali *(ʿa)* Mutawakkil nursed the worst kind of hatred and malice towards Imam Amirul Mu'minin ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (ʿa), the advocate of truth and justice for the entire Islamic world. He denied the merits of Imam ʿAli (ʿa) and compared himself with the gate of the Prophet's (ṣ) knowledge. Even though he called himself Amirul Mu'minin he used to drink wine and play with monkeys. His own son Muntasir was ashamed of his bestial nature and assassinated him.

Demolition of the holy Shrine of Imam Husain *(ʿa)* – One of the worst crimes committed by Mutawakkil was the destruction of the Holy Shrine of Imam Husain (ʿa), the leader of the youth of paradise (ʿa). The holy Shrine was a centre of pilgrimage for Muslims and they

1- Maqat Talabiyyin P.579.

used to go there and pray for the fulfillment of their needs. Many pilgrims were trooping there at all times for the performance of pilgrimage with great respect, while the graves of the Abbasid leaders were dumping places for refuse and filth. They served as abodes and resting places for dogs and wild animals. This reality reflects the brutality and despotism they had shown and its consequences.

He first ordered some Muslims to demolish the holy Shrine but they refused, so he ordered some wretched Jews to pull down the Holy Shrine which they did. They destroyed all the surrounding buildings of the holy shrine. After that, they directed the river towards the Holy Shrine so that it could wash away the holy tomb, but to their surprise, the water went round the holy shrine leaving it dry in the centre. Thus, the holy shrine was named *Hāir* (circle). People found a sweet fragrant smell emerging from within the holy shrine, a scent which people had never smelled before. The fragrant aroma was the fragrance of Islamic teachings, dignity and philanthropy.

Ahwahiri composed this couplet:

When we kiss your shrine, there spreads around

Its fragrant scent or dignity or glorious hand

Muslim communities were very angry over the demolition. In their gatherings, ceremonies and meetings they cursed Mutawakkil and prayed to Allah to take revenge from him. They wrote protest placards carrying degrading words against him, and wrote similar words on the walls. The following couplets were famous at that time:

If Bani Umayyad massacred the son of the daughter of the Prophet (ṣ) brutally;

Bani Abbasid have done the same thing.

Regretting, not having participated in his massacre

They massacred him after his burial.

Governments, Kings, Emperors have come and gone but the holy shrine of the Leader of the Martyrs (ʿa) remains firm and upright as a symbol of pride and dignity for the Muslims. The holy shrine occupies a great place in the hearts of the Muslims. It arouses their emotions and love. Thus, the number of people who pay homage to

the holy shrine of Imam Husain (ʿa) are much more than those who visit *Baitul Haraam* (the holy mosque and the house of Allah in Mecca).

With Imam Hadi *(ʿa)*

We have already described the hardships Imam Hadi (ʿa) suffered during the time of Mutawakkil. He prevented the Shi'as from paying their obligatory religious tax *Khums* (one-fifth) to the Imam (ʿa). At that time, Imam Hasan Al-Askari was in his adolescence, so he was emotionally moved by those hard measures that Mutawakkil took against his father and his followers up to the time that Allah Almighty freed his slaves from the hands of this tyrant and transferred the leadership to Muntasir Abbasi.

2. The government of Muntasir

Muntasir came to power after the revolution he led against his own father. Joy and bliss breezed over the lives of the Shiites. The great nightmare had gone and Muntasir was good and kind to the descendants of Imam ʻAli (ʿa) and his followers.

He lifted the ban on pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Imam Husain (ʿa) the leader of martyrs, and returned the land of Fadak to the descendants of Imamʻ Ali (ʿa). In addition, he did many more favours to them.

Unfortunately, the period of his leadership was short-lived. The Turks, who had great political influence at that time poisoned him. With his death, another historical chapter which was illuminated with honour and courage was once again closed.

3. The government of Musta'in

Al-Musta'in came to power on Sunday 5th of Rabiul Thani 248 A.H. Historians describe him as corrupt, extravagant and a denier of truth. He hated all the holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) like most of his ancestors. Thus, it was not a surprise that he hated Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) very much because the latter commanded great esteem and love in the hearts of Muslims. Many of the Muslims believed in his Imamate while Musta'in and his ancestors did not regard or recognize the grand position of the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa).

The tyrannical ruler commanded his soldiers to arrest Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) and jail him in Awtamash prison. Musta'in's hatred and malice against the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) was clear and open.

Isa ibn Fath was with the Imam (ʿa) in prison. The Imam said to him; "Oh Isa! Your age now is sixty-five years one month and two days." Isa was surprised. He looked into his own diary in which the date of his birth was entered. To his utmost surprise it was exactly as the Imam (ʿa) had said. Then the Imam said to him: 'Have you been blessed with a child?' He replied; "No." The Imam (ʿa) prayed for him saying: "Oh Allah, bless him with a child who will be his supporter, for what an excellent supporter is a child for his parent." Then he recited the following poem for him:

"*Whoever has a supporter can take back his usurped property*

Verily the miserable person is one who has no supporter"

On hearing this, Isa quickly asked; "Oh my master! Do you have a child?" He replied; "By God I will have a child who will fill the earth with equity and justice but as for now I do not …"[1]

All Shiites were worried over the detention of the Imam (ʿa). Their worries increased when they heard that Musta'in had decided to assassinate Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa). The Imam (ʿa) calmed them down when he informed them that there was no need to worry about him and that he was quite safe and protected from the enemy. He informed them of the end of the accursed tyrant after three days.[2] What he predicted actually happened. Three days had not elapsed when the Turks assassinated him.[3]

4. The government of Mu'taz

Mu'taz was Zubair Ja'far ibn Mutawakkil. He came to power in his early youth and had no experience of politics nor administration or state management, so he remained a puppet in the hands of the Turks

1- Jawharatu Kalam P.155.
2- Muhji Da'awat P.273.
3- Al-Ghaibatu Sheikh Tusi P.632.

who were the brain behind his regime. They used him to further their own ends.

Mu'taz hated Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) very much. He arrested the Imam and imprisoned him without giving any reason. The Imam (ʿa) was actually grieved with the hostility and oppression of Mu'taz against him because he exceeded all bounds in his brutal treatment. The Imam (ʿa) prayed to Allah to end his rule. Allah accepted his prayers and punished him severely. The leaders of the Turks (who helped him to the power) demanded that he should pay them their promised rewards and their salaries but the treasury was empty, and there was nothing left, not even nine dinars. He demanded money from his mother who had millions worth of property and wealth but she refused for she was very niggardly. The Turks then attacked Mu'taz and dragged him by his feet. They gave him a thorough beating with heavy sticks and put him under the scorching heat of the sun while they shouted at him: "Resign from the post of leadership on your own! Remove yourself from this power!" They presented him to the chief judge of Baghdad and other top officials who officially removed him from power. After five days of his impeachment, they brought him to a public bathing place and after he had taken his bath, he became very hungry and thirsty but they did not give him anything to eat and refused him water. Afterwards, they forced him to swallow ice. He was left in that condition until he starved to death.[1]

It is pertinent to mention here that the leader of this coup d'etat and rebellion against him was Salih ibn Wasif. He attacked Mu'taz's mother and confiscated all the property she had. The value of the property amounted to five hundred thousand dinars. Beside this, a safety box was found from her basement in which there were one million and three hundred dinars. In her ornament box a rare emerald stone of immense value was found. A second ornament box contained millions worth of jewelery. A third ornament box contained precious stones of dark red colour and other rare valuable items. All this wealth was brought before Salih who made a comment saying: "What a wicked woman. She allowed her son to be killed because of fifty

1- Tarikhu Khulafa P.36.

thousand dinars while she possessed all this property and money." Later on, the mother of Mu'taz left Baghdad for Mecca where she only prayed for the downfall of Salih.[1] Thus, the ultimate end of these despotic rulers was nothing but great loss in this world and in the hereafter.

5. The government of Muhtadi

Al-Muhtadi al-Abbasi came to power when he was thirty-seven years old.[2] He nursed great malice and hatred towards the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa). He inherited this tradition from his ancestors who had shed the noble blood of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) and subjected them to untold persecution and misery.

This tyrant commanded his lieutenants to arrest Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) and put him into prison for several days. One of his Shiites, called Abu Hashim, was also in custody. He was intelligent and trustworthy. He was a prominent Shiite, so the Imam (ʿa) said to him, "O Abu Hashim, verily this tyrant intends to kill me tonight but Allah Almighty has shortened his life."[3] Before this, the Shiites had written a letter to the Imam (ʿa). The contents of the letter are:

We have heard the news that Muhtadi Al-Abbasi has been threatening your Shiites and has said; "By God I will expel them to a new land." He replied to the letter saying: "It will not be possible because his life has been shortened. Five days from now, he will be murdered on the sixth day, after being subjected to harassment and humiliation." The news that the Imam (ʿa) had predicted actually materialised within the said period. The Turks attacked Muhtadi Al-Abbasi and stabbed him to death with their swords. One of the leaders of the Turks sucked Muhtadi's blood that was gushing out until he became intoxicated with the blood. After sucking the blood he said to his friends: "Today I am fully drunk with the blood of Muhtadi just as I used to get drunk with wine."

1- Tarikh Ibn Athir Vol.5 P.544.
2- Muriyul Zahab Vol.4 P.124.
3- Muhji Da'awat P.274.

This ended the life of Muhtadi who was a notorious and stanch enemy of Imam Abu Muhammad Al-Askari (ʿa).

6. The government of Mu'tamid

Mu'tamid came to power at the age of twenty-five.[1] He was only interested in sport, merrymaking and luxuries. He remained engaged in such social activities that aroused his people against him.[2]

During his era, Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) underwent very difficult trials. He commanded his soldiers to arrest the Imam (ʿa) and imprison him. He ordered the prison chief to carefully monitor the Imam's (ʿa) movements in prison. The prison chief reported that the Imam (ʿa) had never acted contrary to the interest of the Abbasid government. Moreover, he had detached himself from this material world by fasting throughout the day and praying all night.

After sometime Mu'tamid again asked the prison chief about the activities of the Imam (ʿa). He gave him the same report as before. After hearing this report, Mu'tamid ordered that he should be released and a sent a letter of apology to him. The head of the prison rushed to give the good news to Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa), but to his surprise when he reached the prison he saw that the Imam had already prepared to leave. He had worn his normal dress and shoes. He handed over Mu'tamid's letter to him. With him in prison was his brother Ja'far ibn 'Ali. The Imam (ʿa) refused to leave without his brother. They granted him that and they went out together.

Even after this, Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) faced a lot of hardships. He was kept under strict surveillance. They monitored all his movements. They put countless soldiers to guard him and prohibited any of his followers from meeting him.

Assassination of Imam Al-Askari *(ʿa)*

The existence of Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) was unbearable for this Abbasid tyrant whose hatred increased after hearing the news that the Imam's (ʿa) love in the hearts of the people had exceeded all bounds,

1- Muriyul Zahab Vol.4 P.138.
2- Tarikhul Khulaf P.363.

that people revered and preferred him above any other person whether from the descendants of ‘Ali or Abbas. There was also an exaggeration that the people sanctified him as if he were an object of worship. He was extremely disturbed by this news so he decided to assassinate the Imam (ʿa) with a lethal poison.[1]

The lethal poison weakened his limbs and he could not get up from his bed. Despite great pain he remained quiet and surrendered all his affairs to Allah the Most High.

Mu’tamid commanded five of his trustworthy security men to carefully monitor the Imam’s (ʿa) house, observe all his affairs, inspect and check everyone who went in and out of his house. He also sent a medical team comprising of physicians and others whom he ordered to examine the Imam (ʿa) in the mornings and in the evenings and not leave the house. The sole aim of this order was to get information about the Imam’s (ʿa) son, the world greatest reformer whose attributes had already been narrated by the Prophet (ṣ).

Towards the heavenly abode

The condition of Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) worsened. The doctors despaired, after several medical check-ups. His ultimate end was drawing close. At that moment, the Imam (ʿa) busied himself with *Zikr Allah* (remembrance of God) and recitation of the Holy Qur’an.

At last, his noble soul left his body to meet Allah (swt) accompanied by Angels of Mercy and welcomed by all Prophets and Messengers of Allah (swt).

His departure was a great loss and calamity that befell the Muslim community of that time. This is because they had lost a great leader, educator, guide and reformer who was always paying attention to their problems and welfare.

Burial preparation

The Imam’s (ʿa) holy body was washed, perfumed and shrouded. The body was carried outside for prayer led by his son Imam Al-

1- Al-Irshad P.383.

Muntazar; Allah's proof on the earth. Afterwards Abu Isa ibn Mutawakkil quickly stepped forward, uncovered the Imam's (ʿa) face and showed it to those present among the Bani Hashim, Bani 'Ali, Bani Abbas, military officers, medical doctors, secretaries, other prominent government officials, chief judges etc. and said: "Be sure that this is Hasan ibn Muhammad Al Askari. He died a natural death. Then he covered the holy face with its shroud. He did this to waive all allegations and accusations that were widespread among the people who believed that Mu'tamid was the one who had killed him at such a young age.

Funeral procession

People from all works of life in Samarra trooped out in large numbers to participate in the funeral procession of this great Imam (ʿa). They closed down all Government offices, commercial centres, markets, schools etc. On that day Samarra city looked like the day of resurrection. This city had never witnessed such a funeral procession attended by different classes of people of different schools of thought and ideologies. While carrying his body the mourners and the sympathizers recalled his virtues and merits. They loudly lamented the great loss and calamity that had befallen the Muslim community.

His last resting place

Amidst slogans of *Takbir* and *Ta'zim* (i.e. Allah is the Greatest, Allah is supreme, there is no god except Allah etc.) the mourners carried the holy body to its last resting place. Finally, he was buried in his house beside the grave of his holy father Imam Al-Hadi (ʿa). May his soul rest in eternal peace, Amen.

With this, we conclude our brief discussion on the life history of Imam Abu Muhammad Al-Askari (ʿa). Interested readers who may wish to have detailed information about his life may refer to our book: *Hayatu (life of) Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa)*.

IMAM MUHAMMAD IBN HASAN AL-MAHDI (ʿA)

Here we are about to initiate a discussion about the only hope of the entire humanity whose values have been torn apart by civil wars and destroyed by the gluttony of imperialism. We have before us a model of justice who will do away with slavery, eliminate despotism and spread mercy and love among mankind. He is the one who will fill the hearts of the oppressed with hope.

We are about to talk about the holy Imam (ʿa) and the ***Qa'im*** of the household of Muhammad (ṣ) whom Allah (swt) has chosen and prepared to fill the earth with equity and justice after it is filled with tyranny and oppression.

Indeed Allah (swt) has chosen the greatest trustee among His friends, one possessing the bravest of hearts, utmost foresight and humility, to carry out the task of totally reforming the universe. There is enough evidence that he comes from the glorious Prophetic family whom Allah Almighty has purified thoroughly from all types of filths and impurities.

We will now briefly explain some historical facts in the biography of the holy Imam (May Allah hasten his appearance).

The glorious son

The whole world was illuminated with the birth of the world's greatest reformer on the 15th of Sh'aban, 256 A.H., who would revive Islam and bring back its past glory, grace and honour and rescue mankind from the darkness of despotism and oppression. It is indeed part of Allah's greatest favours upon mankind that He has hidden him from the eyes of the oppressors. Before this He concealed his mother's pregnancy and his birth in a way similar to the pregnancy of Moses ibn Imran (ʿa).

Historians narrate that when his birth was near, Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) sent for his paternal aunt, Lady Hakima who resembled her grandmother Fatimatu Zahra (ʿa) in her worship, chastity and dignity. When she arrived, the Imam (ʿa) greeted her respectfully,

saying, “Dear aunt, I would be very happy if you break your fast with us in my house tonight for Allah Almighty will delight you with the birth of His trustee, His proof over His creatures and my successor.

Lady Hakima was very happy and delighted. She said: ‘May I be your ransom, my Imam, who will deliver this Caliph?’ He replied: ‘Susan.’ Lady Hakima looked at Susan and not seeing any sign of pregnancy on her, she said: “But she is not pregnant.” Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) smiled and said to her softly; “At dawn her pregnancy will be visible to you. Susan is just like the beloved mother of Moses ibn Imran (ʿa). There was neither a sign of pregnancy nor any sign of labour before the birth of Moses (ʿa). In fact nobody knew about it until the time of his birth. This is because Firaun used to cut-open the stomach of every pregnant woman in search for Moses. My son is just like Moses (ʿa).”[1]

For this reason, Lady Hakima spent the night at the house of her nephew. When it was time for *Maghrib* (sunset prayer) she offered her prayers and then broke her fast with Lady Susan, the beloved mother of the awaited Imam (ʿa). After breaking her fast, she went to bed. When it was time for the night prayer, she woke-up and offered her night prayers. During the last part of her prayer Lady Susan woke up and quickly stood up from her bed trembling. She offered her night prayers and started feeling the labor pains, so Lady Hakima rushed to her and said: “Are you feeling something?” Lady Susan answered anxiously: “Yes, I am feeling uneasy.” Lady Hakima calmed her down by saying softly to her: “Do not entertain any fear. God willing there will be no problem”. It was not long before Lady Susan gave birth to her noble child.

When Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) was given the glad tidings of the birth of his blessed son he was very happy and delighted. He made some comments about the failure of the enemies’ plot (i.e. Abbasid dictators) to kill him and cut off his noble ancestry. He said, “The

1- Biharul Anwar Vol.13 P.10.

oppressors thought they could kill me and cut my Prophetic lineage but how I wish they could now see the power of God".[1]

The birth ceremony

Imam Hasan Al-Askari welcomed the birth of the blessed son with utmost joy and bliss. He performed the normal Islamic rituals for the newly born. He recited the *Aazaan* (call for prayers) in the right ear of the child and the *Iqama* (call that indicates that prayer has started) in his left ear. Thus the words of *Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the greatest) and *La ilaha illa Allah* (There is no god but Allah) were stamped onto his soul through his ears (right from the start).

The new baby was nourished with spiritual food through these words that contain secrets of existence, and the most important aspects of the mission of all Prophets. The newly born baby recited the following verses of the Holy Qur'an: **"Verily, We intend to bestow Our Favour upon the down trodden people of the earth and make them leaders, and also make them inheritors. We wish to establish them (firmly) and give Haamaan and their allies what they have been afraid of."[2]**

This great Imam was born under secret conditions. Everything concerning his birth was hidden because the Abbasid despotic rulers were searching for him to eliminate him physically, for they believed in predictions that said he would be the one who would uproot their dynasty.

Lady Hakima carried the newly born baby, kissed him, and said, "I can smell fragrance which I have never smelled before." Afterwards Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) carried the blessed baby and said, "I entrust to you that which had been entrusted to Musa (ʿa). Live under Allah's grace, under His protection, in His lap and in His vicinity." Then the Imam (ʿa) turned to his aunt and said, "Conceal the news of

1- Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (as) Vol.1 P.24.
2- Suratul-*Qasas*: 5 to 6.

the birth of this newly born baby until the book reaches its appointed time."[1]

General feeding of the people

After the birth of his blessed son, Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) performed *Aqiqa* for him. He slaughtered seventy rams, sent four out of these slaughtered rams to Ibrahim along with a letter. After the opening sentence of *Bismillah*, the letter read: "This is from my son Muhammad Al-Mahdi (ʿa). Eat from it and feed anyone you find from among our Shiites." Besides this he ordered his servants to buy a lot of meat and bread to be donated to the poor people living in the city of Samarra.[2]

Shiites' happiness over his birth

Happiness and joy beyond description dominated all the Shiite communities upon the birth of this glorious leader. They came to visit and meet Imam Abu Muhammad (ʿa) in groups to congratulate him on the birth of his blessed son. One of them was Hasan ibn Hasan Al-Alawi who reports: "I entered the house of Abu Muhammad Hasan ibn ʿAli as his guest. I greeted him warmly and congratulated him on the birth of his son *Al-Qa'im* in Samarra."[3] Somebody said to Abu Hamza ibn Fath "Good news! Last night a child was born to Imam Abu Muhammad Al-Askari." Hamza inquired, "What is his name?" The man replied: "Muhammad" and he is nicknamed Abu'l Qasim."[4]

Naming him

The holy leader was given the name similar to that of his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (ṣ), who was the revealer of the source of scientific knowledge and wisdom on this earth. Narrators of the prophetic traditions unanimously agree that the child's name had been given by his grandfather, the Prophet of

1- Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (as) P.24.
2- Biharul Anwar, Vol.13 P.3,10.
3- Al-Ghaibatu Sheikh Tusi P.38.
4- Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (as) P.26.

Allah (ṣ).[1] He gave him the title of Al-Mahdi (one who guides) because he would guide people towards the religion of truth.[2] This title is the most famous of his titles and the most commonly recognised by the entire Islamic populace.

Showing him to the Shiites

Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) showed his glorious son to his closest Shiites. They were his special chosen followers who sincerely and totally believed in his Imamate. Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) showed his glorious son to them so that the deniers would not deny his existence or the doubters doubt his birth. All of them were forty in number. Among them were: Muhammad ibn Ayyub, Muhammad ibn Usman, and Mu'awiya ibn Hakim. The Imam (ʿa) said to them: "This is your Imam after me, and my successor over you, obey him and do not become divided after me in your religious affairs, for in that case you will surely perish. And remember, you will never see him again after today."[3]

Imam Hasan (ʿa) entrusted his *hujja* (proof) to his special followers and introduced their Imam (ʿa) to them so that they would be eye-witnesses in case they chose to submit their religious trusts to persons outside their circle.

His traits of character

All attributes of perfection were an essential part of the Imam's innate character (May peace of Allah be upon him). Allah Almighty created him from His divine light and perfected him. He also purified him from all kinds of impurities and safeguarded him for reformation of His servants and to establish His religion before the day of Judgement. His attributes are the following:

1- 'Iqdu Durar P.53.
2 - Biharu Anwar Vol.13 P.10.
3- Yanābī' al-Mawaddah P.460.

His vast knowledge

It is an undisputable reality that Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa) has vast knowledge of all fields of knowledge including their branches, both ancient and modern. His great ancestors highlighted his extraordinary knowledge even before he was born. Here are some of their expressions in this regard:

a. Imam ʻAli Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa):

"He possesses more spacious shelter than anyone of you. He is the most knowledgeable of you all and the best of you in maintaining a good relationship with the next of kin."[1]

b. Harith ibn Mughira:

"I asked Abu Abdullah Al-Husain ibn ʻAli (ʿa), ʻWhat is the sign with which one can recognise Al-Mahdi?' He said, ʻFirst, by his knowledge of the lawful and unlawful things, and secondly, people being in need of[2] him while he will not be in need of anyone.'"

Imam Abu Ja'far Al-Baqir (ʿa):

"This matter (the Imamate) would be held by the youngest of us whom people would mention more often than any one of us. Allah will endow him with abundant knowledge and will not let him be alone."[3]

Concerning his abundant knowledge, it has been said that when he appears he will justify his argument by challenging the Jews with the *Taurah* (i.e. the Old Testament) and that would make most of them convert to Islam.

At the time of the minor occultation, he was the sole religious authority in Islam whom people referred to in jurisprudence and all types of knowledge. He had four representatives or deputies who had some contact with him. People used to pass their issues, problems and

1- Al-Ghaibatu Nu'mani P.214.
2- ʻIqdu Durar P.69.
3- ʻIqdu Durar P.109.

questions through these deputies to him. He would answer them and solve their problems through them.

The Imamiyyah encyclopedia on jurisprudence is full of his jurisprudent answers which most of the Imamiyyah scholars and judges depend on and often refer to in their religious verdicts. Most of these verdicts were handwritten by the Imam (ʿa) himself, and have been documented by Sheikh Saduq (May his soul rest in perfect peace).[1]

It is an established fact that the world of scholars from different fields like medicine, physics, chemistry, etc.,would come to meet him when he reappears. They would test him by asking him questions in their different areas of specialization, but to their surprise, he would answer them with perfect answers that they had never heard before, thereby, making them embrace Islam. No one would remain without submitting to his leadership.

His ascetic life

All the life histories of the holy guided Imams (ʿa) have many similarities in common, the most conspicuous being an ascetic life. They all followed in the footsteps of their great grandfather and leader Imam ʿAli Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa), who had divorced this world three times so that he could not go back to it anymore. There are many traditions narrated from the holy Imams (ʿa) concerning the ascetic life of Imam Al-Muntazar (the awaited) (ʿa) before he was born. Here are some of them:

1. Mu'ammar ibn Khalid narrates from Imam Abul Hasan Ar-Rida (ʿa):

"Al-Qa'im will not possess clothes except rough ones and he will not consume food except simple food."

2. Both ʿAli ibn Abi Hamza and Wohaib narrate from Imam Sadiq (ʿa):

1- Biharul Anwar Vol.52 P.359.

"How the reappearance of the Imam (ʿa) will surprise you! By God, he possesses no clothes except rough ones and does not possess food except dried bread made from wheat."[1]

3. Abu Basir narrates from Imam Sadiq (ʿa):

"He does not have clothes except rough ones and does not have food except dry bread made of barley."[2]

If his ways of life were different, Allah Almighty would not have chosen him to carry out the task of reforming humanity right from the time He created this earth. He is the person who will come to fill the earth with equity and justice after it will be filled with oppression and tyranny.

He will save humanity from the oppression and brutality of the oppressive and arrogant rulers. He will distribute Allah's bounties and blessings among the deprived and oppressed people in such a way that there will remain no signs of poverty or destitution on earth.

His patience

Another noble trait of Imam Al-Muntazar (ʿa) is his patience in the face of calamities and hard trials. This Imam (ʿa) will confront the worst and heaviest of calamities and trials. During his long period, he will witness horrible events and the hardest attacks aimed at wiping out Islam. The bitter part of the situation will be that the Muslims will be like prey being hunted by the infidel imperialists. The infidels would spread crime and corruption over the earth, prohibit Allah's law, hijack and usurp Muslim property and wealth, and interfere in their private and public affairs. The Muslims will have no power, freedom or independence. Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa) will patiently witness all this but surrender everything to Allah (swt) until He grants him permission to reappear in order to wage the great *Jihad* (holy war) against the oppressors.

1- Al-Gaibatu Nu'man P.234.
2- Al-Gaibatu Nu'man P.234.

His bravery

Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa) possesses the bravest of hearts. He is the most powerful of all soldiers (of his time), most determined in his decisions. He is like his grandfather the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) in his strong will, steadfastness and firmness of purpose, especially in the face of trials and calamities.

The infidels and the hypocrites wish to pull down the banner of Islam and extinguish the light of Allah (swt), but with his heroic strong will and steadfastness he will succeed in cutting off their heads, uprooting their armies and upholding Allah's flag on earth. He will make the oppressors taste bitter defeat and return to Islam its lost glory and grandeur. He would not be identified with any weakness. No strength would be able to confront or fight him and the whole world will be obedient to his orders. By that time the flag of monotheism would fly high in every area and corner of the universe.

His generosity

Imam Al-Muntazar (ʿa) will be the most generous figure in history.

His ancestors described his generosity and kindness thus:

1. Abu S'aeed narrates from the Prophet (ṣ):

"Verily a man will come to him and say, 'Oh Mahdi, please aid me, help me (with some money).' He will fill the man's clothes with so much money that he will be unable to carry it."[1]

2. Jabir relates that a man once came to Imam Abi Ja'far (ʿa) in his presence who said:

"May Allah bless you! Please take this *Khums*, of which one hundred dirhams are my *Zakat* (poor-alms), and put it in its rightful place,. It is my religious obligatory rate." Abu Ja'far said to him, "Please take it and distribute it among your neighbours, orphans, needy people and your Muslim brothers and sisters. "What you mean will only happen when our Qa'im appears; for he will divide wealth with equity among

1- Muntakhab Kanzul Ummal Vol.6 P.29, Yanabi Muwadda P.431, Masabihu Sunnah Vol.3 P.493.

people. He will establish justice among all the creatures of Allah, both righteous and bad. Whoever obeys him will be obeying Allah and whoever disobeys him will be disobeying Allah (swt). He will be called Al-Mahdi (the guide) because he will direct and guide people to the truth that was concealed. He will bring out the *Taurah* (Old Testament) and other heavenly books from a cave in the city of *Antakiyya*. He will judge and rule the people of the *Taurah* with the *Taurah*, followers of the Bible with the Bible and followers of the *Zabur* (Psalms) with the Psalms, and the followers of the *Furqan* (i.e. the Qur'an) with the *Furqan.*

The wealth of the earth, whether under or above its surface, would be at his disposal. He will say to the people, "Please come and take this wealth which has made you break your kinship bonds or shed blood or commit what Allah has forbidden. He will then give out gifts to people the kind of which no one has ever witnessed before."[1]

There are many other traditions that affirm that the Imam (ʿa) is an ocean of generosity and kindness and that he will extend his generosity and favour to the entire creation of Allah (swt) by rescuing them from abject poverty and hunger and spread contentment among people.

His firmness in upholding the truth

Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa) Al-Muntazar is the strongest of those who defend the truth, and who do not fear the criticism of the faultfinders. His ways and manners are very similar to those of his holy ancestors who defended the truth and sacrificed their lives for the sake of propagating social justice among people.

By the grace of God, when the whole world will be illuminated by the reappearance of the Qa'im of the family of Muhammad (ṣ) he will establish the truth and nothing but the truth by uprooting falsehood or tyranny completely.

1- Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi P.45.

His worship

Imam Al-Mahdi's (ʿa) worship is like that of his pure grandfathers who devoted their entire lives to the worship of Allah Almighty with total submission to His will by fasting during the day and praying at night. Historians have narrated many of his glorious prayers and supplications that he used to recite during his *Salat* (ritual prayers) and *Qunut* that depict his strong link with Allah (swt). We have mentioned some of them in our book: *Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (ʿa)* (May Allah hastens his appearance).

His minor occultation

It was indeed part of Allah's special favour upon the Imam (ʿa) that He hid him away from the eyes of the people, especially the Abbasid tyrants who tried by all means to eliminate him. Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa) left them in the same way his grandfather the Prophet (ṣ) threw dust in the eyes of the Quraish who were plotting to kill him. We will now briefly discuss the minor occultation of the Holy Imam (ʿa):

Time of his disappearance

The minor occultation started after the death of his father Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa) in the year 260 (A.H.).[1] At this time, he disappeared from the sight of the people but he used to meet some of his special or chosen followers and pious people from time to time.

Place of occultation

Al-Imam Muntazar (ʿa) disappeared from the sight of the people in his own house in Samarra in which the graves of his grandfather and father are located. To our greatest surprise some people who had a grudge against the Shi'as were of the view that he had disappeared in an underground room in Samarra, or in another place. For this reason, every night after the sunset prayer, they would stand in front of the door of one of those underground buildings in Samarra and call out his name so that he should come out. This action would continue until

1- Miratu Jinan Vol.2 P.462, Tarikh khamis Vol.2 P.348, Tarikh Ibn Wurdi Vol.1 P.369.

late at night. Then they would disperse until the following night and repeat the same thing.[1]

This is a superstitious belief that has neither justification nor source. It only shows their ignorance and grudge against the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) and their Shiites. As far as the underground building located in Samarra is concerned, it used to be a praying ground for the three infallible Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa). No Shiite scholars or historians have ever claimed that he (i.e. the Imam) had disappeared in one of the underground buildings or in any other one mentioned by the people who have no knowledge of the religion. We have discussed this issue in detail in our book: *Hayatu-Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (ʿa)*. Interested readers may refer to it.

His special ambassadors

Imam Muntazar (ʿa) had appointed special ambassadors from among his special scholars and pious students who acted as mediators between the Imam (ʿa) and his Shiites. Their duties were to collect questions concerning Islamic laws from the people, pass them over to the Imam (ʿa), and collect their answers from the Imam (ʿa) and pass them over to the people. The special ambassadors were:

1. Usman ibn Saeed

He was one of the Imam's (ʿa) ambassadors. He was a reliable scholar, intelligent and trustworthy. He had played a positive role in the service of the holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa), especially during the days when the tyrant Mutawakkil imposed stringent economic sanctions upon Imam Hadi (ʿa), to prevent the obligatory religious wealth from reaching him. Usman ibn Saeed used to gather the amount of the *Khums* and *Zakat*, put it inside cooking oil, and send it to Imam Hadi (ʿa). After the demise of Imam Hadi (ʿa), he did the same for Imam Hasan Al-Askari (ʿa). In this way, he managed to defeat the economic crisis that handcuffed the Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa). Usman served as a link and mediator between the Imams and their followers. In fact, he represented the Imams in

1- Muqadimatu Ibn Khaldun P.359.

all issues, thus the Imam's (ʿa) letters, obligatory religious *Khums* and other property passed through him.

His death

Usman ibn Saeed passed away to meet his merciful Lord. He was buried in Baghdad near the area known as Risafah. His mausoleum is ever congested with pilgrims comprising of believers and pious men who are always trooping there in large numbers to pay him a visit.

The Imam's *(ʿa)* condolence message

Imam Al-Muntazar (ʿa) expressed deep sorrow and grief over the departure of Usman ibn Saeed. His condolence was expressed in a letter which he sent to his pious son Muhammad ibn Usman. The text of the letter reads:

Inna lillahi wa innaa ilaihi rajiun (verily we are from Allah and to Him is our return). We are submissive to his commandments and pleased with his judgement over us. Your father lived a fortunate and happy life and passed away in a praiseworthy manner, so may Allah have mercy upon him and join him with His pious servants and friends. He tried hard to solve people's problems and always did things that would make him closer to them. May Allah make him happy and forgive him. May Allah reward you and console you on this great loss. We really feel his absence just as you do and are grieved just as you are grieved. May Allah grant him happiness in his final abode; indeed, he has been very fortunate that Allah Almighty has blessed him with a son like you who will represent him and take his position after him. Here I say, "All praise is to Allah, every good soul is happy with your position and Allah has bestowed His favour upon you. I pray to Allah to strengthen you, support you and grant you success. May Allah always be your Leader, your Guide, and your Protector."[1]

This letter shows the Imam's (ʿa) sorrow and grief over the departure of his deputy, who was a symbol of faith and justice as the Imam (ʿa) has described him. Likewise the Imam (ʿa) has reposed great

1- Biharul Anwar Vol.13 P.96.

confidence and trust in his son Muhammad, who was also an embodiment of the qualities of nobility.

2. Muhammad ibn Usman

Muhammad ibn Usman became Imam Mahdi's ambassador (after his father). He was indeed a most trustworthy and prominent Shiite scholar of that time, and like his father, loved by all. People sought his advice in all their dealings and problems. The Shiites normally passed letters, property and *Khums*, the religious obligatory rate, to him. He in turn, submitted them to the Imam Al-Muntazar (ʿa) and then received the answers from the Imam (ʿa) and passed them to their respective owners.

Imam Al-Muntazar (ʿa) wrote a letter to Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Al-Ahwazi concerning Muhammad ibn Usman. The letter read:

"He (i.e. Muhammad bn Usman) was our trustworthy friend when his father was alive. May Allah be pleased with him and make him happy. He occupies his father's place now. He follows well in his father's footsteps. He carries out our commandments properly and does what he is commanded. May Allah reward him abundantly! Please do as he says." [1]

Muhammad ibn Usman passed away on the last day of the month of Jumadi ul Awwal, in the year 305 (A.H.).[2]

3. Husain ibn Ruh

He was the third ambassador of Imam Muntazar (ʿa). He possessed great piety, wide knowledge and intelligence. He became the Imam's (ʿa) deputy after the death of Muhammad ibn Usman as he (i.e. Muhammad ibn Usman) was the one who indicated that Husain ibn Ruh would be his successor. When some Shiites asked who would succeed him, he said: "This Abu Qasim Husain ibn Ruh ibn Abi Bahr Nobakhti will be in my position and ambassador between you and *Sahib ul Amar* (i.e. one who is referred to in all affairs) meaning Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa) (may Allah hasten his appearance). He will be

1- Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (as) P.124.
2- Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (as) P.126.

his representative as he is reliable and trustworthy, therefore, you should refer to him in all your problems. I advice you to rely upon him in important duties and this is how I have been commanded and I have delivered the message as ordered."[1]

There was once a debate between Husain ibn Ruh and a person who denied the truth. Husain defeated his opponent in a very wonderful way which greatly impressed Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Ishaq, so he said to him, "Are all the answers from you or have you taken them from the rightly guided Imams (ʿa)?" Husain replied: "Oh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim! It is better that I should fall from heaven to the earth while a bird snatches me as its prey, or a (strong) wind blows me to a remote place than to say something in the religion of Allah Almighty from myself. Therefore, all what you have heard came from the original source i.e. the *Proof*. May Allah's peace be upon him. All my answers are from him…"[2]

He remained the Imam's (ʿa) deputy for about twenty-one or twenty-two years. He became the main reference source *Marja'a* for the Shiites. He was a trustworthy mediator between them and the Imam (ʿa).

At last, he became ill for some days after which he passed away in the year 326 A.H.[3] His body was prepared and buried after the appropriate religious funeral rituals and a great funeral procession that followed. His grave is located in a place called *Shurjah* market, which was a commercial centre in Baghdad.

4. 'Ali ibn Muhammad As-Samiri

'Ali ibn Muhammad As-Samiri took over the dignified mantle of the Imam's (ʿa) deputy as a direct appointment from the Imam himself (ʿa). He was the last of the Imam's ambassadors. He performed the duty of ambassadorship with truth and sincerity. Narrators have reported that; "Before his death he brought out a letter for the Shiites containing the Imam's (ʿa) signature. After the opening

1- Muntakhabul Athar P.397.
2- Muntakhabul Athar P.397, Al-Ghaiba (Shaikh Tusi) P.383.
3- Muntakhabul Athar P.392.

sentence of Bismillah, the content of the letter read: "Oh 'Ali ibn Muhammad As-Samiri! May Allah reward your Muslim brothers and sisters for your departure (from this world) for surely you are about to pass away; you have six days between you and death, so prepare yourself. Do not name anyone to succeed you because the time for the major occultation has already come. I will not appear again except by the command of Allah (swt), that my reappearance will not occur until after a long period, after hearts have become hardened and the earth filled with oppression. Some people will come to my Shiites and claim that they have seen me, they will be great liars and impostors. There is no strength or power except with Allah the Most High, the Most Grand…."[1]

It is clear from the content of the letter that Imam Al-Muntazar ('a) has denied and condemned anyone who claims to they have met or seen him during the major occultation *Ghaibatu Kubra*, and condemned him as a great liar and impostor. It is an established fact that some great and pious Shiite personalities and scholars claim have met, seen and heard his utterances after he had disappeared into the major occultation, but no one ever claimed to have been appointed as another ambassador of the Imam ('a) as those four deputies because the door for that had already been closed.

As-Samiri remained ill for some days. During his illness some close Shiites visited him and inquired: "Who is your successor?" He replied, "That matter belongs to Allah the Most High. He knows best and has full control over all things." He passed away in the year 329 A.H in the middle of the month of Sha'aban.[2]

The leadership of the learned scholars

Imam Al-Muntazar ('a) has affirmed that the grand Shiite scholars and the Jurists should conduct the affairs of the people and that they should deputise him during the major occultation. He commanded his followers to refer to them and take their religious laws and verdicts from them. In a letter that he had sent to Sheikh Al-Mufid (may Allah

1- Mu'jam Rijalu Hadith Vol.13 P.185.
2- Al-Ghaibatu Shaikh Tusi P.242.

be pleased with him) he wrote: "With regards to the events that will be happen (after me), please refer to the narrators of our traditions *Ruwatuna*, for they are my proofs *hujja* over you and I am Allah's proof over you all."[1]

Further details are available in our book: *Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (ʿa)*. Interested readers may refer to it.

The major occultation

Thus, the grand learned Shi'a scholars took over the duty of deputising Imam Al-Muntazar (may Allah hasten his noble appearance) since the commencement of the greater occultation. The Shiites refer to them in the verdicts they give concerning their religious matters. Perhaps it is pertinent to mention here that some prominent pious scholars have had contact with the Imam (ʿa). Among them was the grand pious and trustworthy scholar Sheikh Mufid (may Allah be pleased with him). In fact, he had great contact with him and received three letters from him. We have mentioned some of them in our book: *Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (ʿa)*.

Questions and criticisms

The life history of Imam Al-Muntazar (ʿa) has been questioned and criticised. Among such questions are as follows:

1. His prolonged life-span

A lot of questions have been asked with regard to the extended life-span of Imam Mahdi (ʿa).

How is it possible for him to have lived for such a long time i.e. over one thousand, one hundred and fifty years without becoming old?

Answer

a. Indeed prolonging the life-span of a person is a matter which is possible through the power of Allah the Most Supreme Creator.We have seen that Prophet Noah (ʿa) lived among his people, inviting

1- Wasa'il al-Shi'a: Kitabu Qada Vol.18 P.101.

them to Monotheism, *Tawhid,* for nine hundred and fifty years as the Qur'an has confirmed. Why then, do we believe in the long age of Noah (ʿa) and find it impossible to believe in the long age of Imam Al-Mahdi Al-Muntazar (ʿa), whereas both of them are Allah's vicegerents sent with the mission of social reformation?

b. If we think that a long age of hundred or thousands of years for a human being is impossible because it is against the natural laws that cause old age, then this impossibility is only for us and not for Allah (swt). Nothing is impossible, all natural laws are subject to His will, and this is a simple matter for Allah (swt). He made fire which is an igniting factor to become cold and safe for the great prophet Ibrahim (ʿa). Similarly, He split the ocean for Prophet Moses (ʿa), and his clan and saved them but engulfed Firaun (Pharaoh) and his army with the water.

Verily Allah's Wish prevails over all things. When He intends something nothing can stop it, right from non-existence up to existence. Did He not made his great Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) leave his house without being seen by anyone at the time the Quraish had surrounded his house to kill him?

What is the reason behind his prolonged age?

Another question: Why is the age of Imam Muntazar *(ʿa)* prolonged? Why is his age not like those of his holy ancestors?

Answer

There is no doubt that Allah Almighty has specially chosen Imam Mahdi Al-Muntazar (ʿa) for the reformation of the whole universe. He has been charged with the duty of saving man from falling into misguidance. Imam Al-Muntazar (ʿa) is the overall reformer for all people all over the surface of the earth. For this reason there must be stages of dark periods in which people suffer a lot of oppression and injustice and then he appear as a saviour and rescuer bringing relief. With that, he will fill the earth with justice and equity.

Why has he not appeared?

Another question: Why did he not appear up till now to establish Allah's law on earth, despite injustice and oppression?

Answer

His appearance has nothing to do with the wishes of people; the matter lies in the hands of the Almighty. Allah (swt) sent His servant and messenger Muhammad (ṣ) to the whole universe after the period of five centuries of darkness and ignorance had elapsed between him and the last prophet (Jesus (ʿa)). He came after necessary conditions, favourable for the propagation of his mission had materialized. Likewise is the case of the reappearance of Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa). He will appear according to the plan of Allah the Most High. Allah will prepare the necessary conditions that would support his revolution in every area and corner of the world and then send him to establish pure justice among His servants.

How would he be able to transform the whole world, full of oppression, insecurity and tyranny, into a new system of justice, security and stability? In addition, how will he make it a place where there will be no room for cheating, transgression, dictatorship, no sign of poverty, destitution or deprivation?

Answer

In fact, the matter is even now possible because the universal events that have taken place are changes carried out by the great reformers among human beings. The great Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) single-handedly changed the world by raising Allah's (swt) banner over the surface of the earth. With his strong Will, firm determination and Allah's help, he succeeded in subduing the influential chiefs and people of the Book who opposed him, and upheld monotheism. Likewise, Prophet Moses (ʿa) defeated Pharaoh and established Allah's word on this earth. Prophet Jesus (ʿa) and the other prophets and messengers of Allah (swt) propagated the missions of reformation independently. Thus, there is a clear distinction between these kinds of individuals in the field of social transformation contrary to the view of Marx that denies the value of individual roles in such areas. He claims that an individual has neither any role nor

influence in historical events or changes; all changes are due to societal or collective efforts.

In any case, Imam Al-Muntazar Al-Mahdi (ʿa) is just like his grandfather, the great Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (ṣ) in changing a system of life based on oppression and transgression. He will bring a total change and relieve humanity from the trials and calamities surrounding it and establish security, peace, tranquility, love and brotherhood among people. This brings us to the end of some of the questions raised concerning the issue of Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa). We have mentioned a lot of them in our book: *Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (ʿa)*.

Signs of the appearance of Imam Al-Muntazar *(ʿa)*

As for the signs of the appearance of Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa), many traditions pertaining to them have been reported. We will hereby mention some of them.

1. Widespread oppression

One of the most significant signs of the appearance of Imam Al-Muntazar (ʿa) is the spread of oppression and tyranny. In addition to that, there would be general insecurity. There would be poverty and destitution everywhere, life would become difficult and full of calamities, tragic events, anxiety, threats and fear would confront man everywhere. A corrupt lifestyle would dominate society; people would compete with one another in committing crimes. Islam would become alien just as it was when it came, its power will be frozen. The superpowers and arrogant nations would freeze its principles, hijack and usurp its wealth and treasure. Islamic glory would be lost and it would come under the influence of the so-called superpowers.

a. Abu Saeed Khudri narrates from the Prophet (s) said: "Great calamity will befall my people towards the end of time (i.e. the world) from their leaders. It will be a kind of disaster the likes of which no one will have heard or seen. The whole world will become straitened for the believers. This will continue until tyranny and oppression fills the earth. A believer will have no place of refuge from his trials. Then in that state of affairs, Allah Almighty will send a man from my household to fill the earth with justice and equity, just as it would

have been filled with oppression and tyranny. All the dwellers of the heaven and the earth will be pleased with him. The earth will not conceal any of its seeds but send it forth and the sky will not hold back any drop of water but pour it down in abundance."[1]

This tradition reveals the kind of calamity and disaster that the Muslims would suffer from their despotic rulers. Afterwards Allah (swt) will save them through the intervention of Imam Mahdi (ʿa) by filling the earth with blessings and kindness. In addition he will crush the oppressors.

b. Awf bin Malik narrated from the Prophet *(ṣ)* said: "Oh Awf, what would be the condition if this *Ummah* (nation) when it will break into seventy-three factions with only one faction in Paradise and the remaining seventy-two in Hell-fire'." Awf inquired: 'When will this happen?' He replied: "That would take place when oppressive soldiers increase in numbers, slaves become rulers, ignorant people sit on the pulpits to deliver lectures, a few ruling classes use public treasure for their personal usage by limiting it to their relatives only. At that time, *Zakat* (poor rate) would be taken as booty, entrusted properties would be taken as gain or profit, and Allah's religion would be studied not for the sake of Allah. Man would obey his wife but he would be rude to his mother and he would distance from his father. The later generations of this Ummah would abuse the earlier generations. Corrupt men *Fasiq* would be the rulers of their tribesmen. The leader of the people would be the worst of them and a man would be respected for fear of his evil and wickedness. Then there would be trials upon trials until a man from my family would appear. His name will be Al-Mahdi (ʿa)."[2]

The above tradition talks about the calamities that would befall the Islamic world in terms of treachery, corruption, and deviation of Muslims from the fundamental principles of Islam, causing injustice and despotism, brutalities and crimes to spread in society. Then at that stage, Allah (swt) would save them through His great trustee and ambassador Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa), who would revive the religion and uphold Islamic teachings.

1- 'Iqdu Durar P.113.
2- Kanzul Ummal Vol.6 P.44. It is similar to the tradition in Urf Wardi Vol.2 P.67.

c. The Prophet *(ṣ)* said: "The Mahdi of this *Ummah* will be from us when the world will be filled with trials, killings, chaos and corruption. Paths to the truth will be cut off, people will attack one another, the elderly person will no more have mercy on the younger ones while the younger ones will no more respect the elders. At that time Allah (swt) will raise Al-Mahdi (ʿa). He is the ninth grandson of Imam Husain (ʿa). He will break open the fortress of misguidance to give guidance and open locked hearts. Then he will establish the religion in the later days in the same way I did in the early days of Islam. He will fill the earth with justice just as it would be filled up with tyranny."[1]

This tradition affirms the problems and trials that would afflict the entire life of mankind when Allah will send His pure and great vicegerent to build a new happy life full of virtue, bliss and success.

2. Emergence of Dajjal

One of the definite and most certain signs of the appearance of Imam Mahdi (ʿa) is the emergence of Dajjal in this world. Dajjal will try his utmost to mislead people from the right path. The Jews would rally round him. It is certain that he would deceive many simple-minded people with wealth and riches. The following prophetic traditions throw more light on the issue.

a. Hisham ibn Amir said he heard Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) saying: "Verily there is no greater terror that will occur between the creation of Adam and the Day of Resurrection than that of Dajjal."[2]

The meaning of this tradition:

This tradition indicates that the appearance of Dajjal would be the greatest tragedy that would confront the world.

b. Anas ibn Malik narrated that the holy Prophet *(ṣ)* said; "There is no Prophet who has not warned people about the danger of Dajjal,

1- Hayatu al-Imam al-Mahdi (as) P.251.
2- Hayatu Imam Al-Mahdi (as) P.251.

the one-eyed liar. "The fact is that he is a one-eyed being and your Lord is not one-eyed."[1]

Indeed, Prophets warned people about the evil of Dajjal who would cheat and deceive people. He would prevent them from the truth and make them commit abominable crimes. The one-eyed Dajjal is one of the most horrible pests of humanity. We have the characters and the conditions of Dajjal in more detail in our book: *Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi ('a)*.

3. Appearance of Sufyani

One of the most undoubted signs of the appearance of Imam Muhammad Al-Muntazar ('a) is the emergence of Sufyani. He would be one of the pillars of evil and corruption on earth. His ancestry lineage ends up with Abu Sufyan, the archenemy of Islam.

Imam Amirul Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) has explained fully the character and the satanic manners of Dajjal in a tradition which we have mentioned in our book: *Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi ('a)*.

4. Black banners

Among the undoubted signs of Imam Al-Mahdi's appearance would be the formation of an Islamic army carrying black banners. The most reliable speculation about it is the flags or banners commemorating the leader of martyrs Imam Husain ('a). Many traditions affirm this claim. Among them are the following:

a. Hasan narrated through his normal chain of narration that the Prophet (ṣ) mentioned some of the calamities that would befall his family after him to the extent that Allah (swt) will raise (an army carrying) black banners in the eastern region. Whoever helps that army helps Allah (swt) and whoever scorns it scorns Allah (swt). They will continue to advance until a man who has my name will come and they (i.e. the soldiers) will surrender all their affairs to him, so Allah will support him and help him."[2]

1- 'Iqdu Durar P.323, Sahih al-Bukhari Vol.3 P.1214.
2- Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahadi (as).

b. Thawban narrates that the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said: "When you see (an army carrying) black banners coming from Khurasan then join it because within them would be Allah's vicegerent Al-Mahdi (ʿa).[1]

c. Jabir narrates that Imam Abu Ja'far (ʿa) said: "There would descend banners (carried by an army) that would march from Khurasan towards Kufa; and when Al-Mahdi (ʿa) appears in Mecca they will go to him and pledge allegiance to him."[2]

There are still many other traditions affirming the emergence of (an army carrying) black flags or banners that would come from Khurasan or the East. Without doubt, it is among the greatest signs of the appearance of Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa).

5. A call from the sky

One of the certain signs of the appearance of Imam Al- Mahdi (ʿa) is that there would be a loud exclamation of an angel from the sky giving information concerning his appearance.

The voice would invite all humanity to pledge allegiance to him. The voice would address every nation or tribe in their own language. There are many traditions confirming this matter. Among them are the following:

a. Abdullah ibn Imran narrates that the Prophet (s) said: "Mahdi (ʿa) would emerge wearing a turban on his head and there will be an angel with him calling out, "This is Allah's Caliph (vicegerent), hence follow him."[3]

b. Imam Rida (ʿa) said: "When Imam Al-Muntazar (ʿa) emerges, the earth will be illuminated with his light and the scale of justice will be set among mankind. No one will oppress another person. He is the one for whom the earth will be folded up. He will not have a shadow. He is the one about whom a caller would call from the sky and everyone on the earth would hear his voice saying: "Lo! Verily the

1- Kanzul Ummal Vol.7 P.182.
2- Al-Urf Wurdi Vol.2 P.68.
3- Al-Urf Wurdi Vol.2 P.11, Nurul Absar P.155, Yanabi'u Al-Mawadda P.447.

Hujja (proof) of Allah has appeared in the house of Allah (in Mecca), so follow him, for verily the truth is in him and with him, and that is the saying of Allah the Most High: **"If we wish we could send down upon them from the heavens a sign to which their heads would submit willingly."** [1] [2]

c. Imam 'Ali Amirul Mu'minin (ʿa) said: "When a caller calls from the sky saying that verily the truth is with the family of Muhammad (ṣ), at that time Al-Mahdi (ʿa) will appear to mankind and everyone will be so happy that they will not mention anything other than him."[3]

There are still many traditions narrated from Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) and the infallible Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa) with the contents carrying the same meanings. They all point to the fact that one of the signs of the appearance of Imam Al-Muntazar (ʿa) is that there would be avoice of an angel calling from the sky or heavens with the emphasis that the voice would address every nation and people in their local languages.

6. Jesus would descend from the heavens

Among the signs of the reappearance of Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa) is that Jesus (May peace be upon him) will descend from the heavens to the earth. Jesus will then pledge allegiance to him and pray behind him (i.e. Imam Mahdi (ʿa). On seeing this, the Christians will embrace Islam.

Some traditions that throw more light on the issue are:

a. The Prophet (ṣ) said: "Verily my successors and my trustees are twelve in number, the first of them is my brother and the last of them is my son."

One of the companions asked: "Who is your brother?" The Prophet answered, "'Ali ibn Abi Talib." Another companion asked: "Who is your son?" He replied, "Al-Mahdi who will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it will be filled with oppression and tyranny. I swear by Allah, who has truly sent me as a Warner, even if only one

1- Far'id Samtin Vol.1 P.337.
2- Suratu *Shura*: 4.
3- Al-Malaahim wal Fatan P.36.

day remains for the end of this world. Verily, Allah would lengthen that day so that my son Al-Mahdi could appear in it; then Jesus the son of Mary would descend from the heavens and pray behind him; and the earth would glitter with the light of its Lord whose authority and leadership would extend to include both East and West."[1]

b. The Prophet (ṣ) said: "Jesus, son of Mary, would descend at the time of the dawn prayer and the hair of his head would be curly, reddish white, and it will shine as if oil was trickling from it. He will destroy all the crosses which are symbols of Trinity and then kill all the pigs and the Dajjal. He will give the wealth of Imam e Zaman (ʿa) to him. All people of the Book will walk behind him. He will be a trustworthy minister and right-hand man of the Imam Qa'im of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa). He will spread security and peace in the East and West".[2]

We have narrated in great numbers and mentioned many of such traditions in our book: *Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (ʿa)*.

The time of his appearance

The appearance of Imam Al-Muntazar (ʿa) will take place on Saturday, the 10th of Muharram. This day is the day of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (ʿa), the grandson and sweet fragrance of the Prophet (ṣ). This has been supported by many traditions. Some of them are as follows:

1. Abu Basir narrated that Imam Sadiq *(ʿa)* said: "Al-Qa'im (Imam Mahdi (ʿa) would emerge on Saturday, the day of Ashura, i.e. the 10th day of Muharram, which was the day on which Imam Husain (ʿa) was murdered."[3]

2. 'Ali ibn Mahziyar narrates that Imam Abu Ja'far Muhammad Al-Baqir *(ʿa)* said: "It is as if I am seeing the Qa'im on the day of *Ashura*, i.e. on Saturday, standing between *Rukni* (corners of the Kaa'ba) and the *Maqam* (place of the footprint of prophet Ibrahim

1- Ghaayatul Muraam P.43, Faraidu Samtin Vol.2 P.312.
2- Ghaayatul Maraam P.697. Quoted from Tafsir Tha'labi.
3- Kamalu Din Vol.2 P.254.

(ʿa), while Archangel Gabriel is standing before him calling people to pledge allegiance to Allah through him. He will fill the earth with justice just as it will be filled before that time with oppression and injustice."[1]

There are many other traditions that have mentioned the specific time and place of his appearance. We have explained many things concerning the activities of the Imam Al-Muntazar at the time of his appearance in our book: *Hayatu Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (ʿa),* i.e. the life of Imam Al-Mahdi (ʿa).

With this brief account of the Biographies of the holy Imams (ʿa), the bearers of truth and guidance, we hereby conclude this discussion about them. We wish all our readers success both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Perhaps it is pertinent to remind our honourable readers that we have explained their life history as an extension of that of their ancestor and great grandfather Prophet Muhammad (ṣ). These have been discussed in detail in our book called *The Encyclopedia of the Ahlul-Bayt (ʿa).*

1- Al-Ghaibatul Sheikh Tusi P.453.

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